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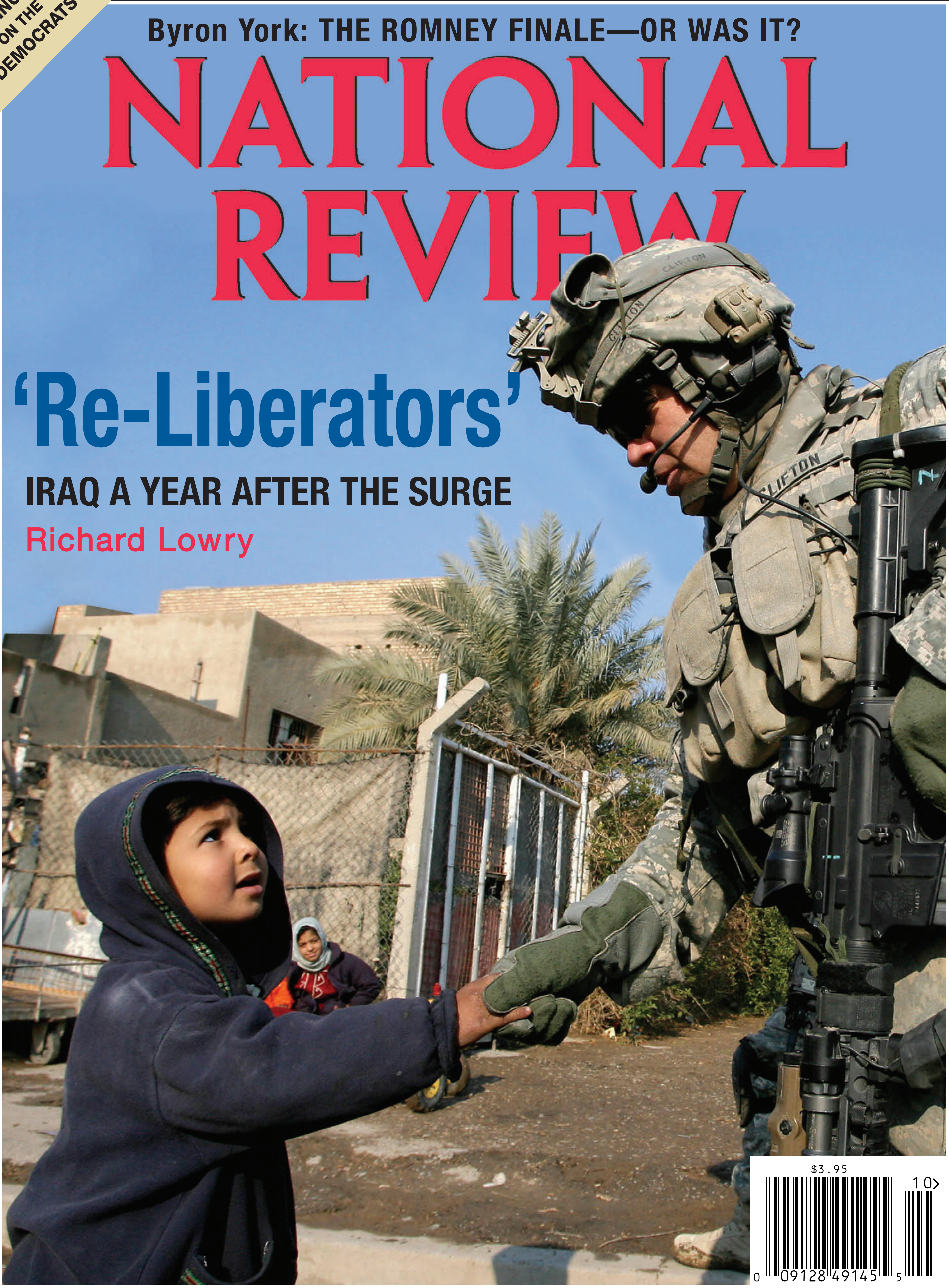
Byron York: THE ROMNEY FINALE—OR WAS IT?

NATIONAL REVIEW

‘Re-Liberators’

IRAQ A YEAR AFTER THE SURGE

Richard Lowry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■ COVER STORY

‘Re-Liberators’

Iraq is a mind-bogglingly complex country that defies generalizations, except this one: Where U.S. troops have a substantial presence, there is more security, more grassroots political activity, and more economic progress. The Iraqi people know this full well. A top U.S. general puts it aptly when he says, “In some ways, our soldiers have come to be seen as re-liberators.” *By Richard Lowry*

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FACE THE MUSIC

In his piece on the New York Philharmonic's trip to North Korea, Jay Nordlinger writes, "I myself would not accept an invitation from the regime of Kim Jong Il—certainly not to give a concert" ("Date in Pyongyang," February 11). That concert may indeed be "a boon to Kim," as Mr. Nordlinger fears. But we should remember that music has always been a threat to dictatorships. Plato, the grandfather of totalitarianism, would not have tolerated the manufacture of the flute or other instruments "capable of modulation into all the modes." He feared the power of music, as did Ayatollah Khomeini, as did Chairman Mao, who prohibited most music and theater, blessing only the eight revolutionary operas selected by his wife, Jiang Qing.

I was teaching at Hebei University in Baoding, China, during the Beijing Spring (my reports appeared in NATIONAL REVIEW). On May 18, 1989, the students took over the campus loudspeakers. What did they play? Beethoven.

Music is thriving, and dissidents keep appearing. When music reaches Pyongyang, it will be evidence that there is more to life than simply adoring Kim Jong Il.

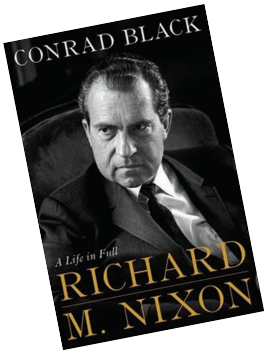
George Jochnowitz
New York, N.Y.

JAY NORDLINGER RESPONDS: Professor Jochnowitz is experienced and wise. But I'd be cautious about laying down rules—for example, about music and dictatorships. Hitler and music got along pretty well, unfortunately. In my exploration of music and totalitarianism, I've found it hard to make absolute statements. Say one thing, you can immediately contradict it. I think that cases like the New York Philharmonic's have to be taken individually. We go by gut, conscience.

TO THE NINES

We were troubled by the allegation in your recent article ("The Left Fires a Counter-Volley," February 25) that the Joyce Foundation has made "ethically questionable" grants in the area of gun violence. You cite as an example "a $900,000 donation to the gun-control panel of the National Academy of Sciences." You have the amount wrong: Our grant to support the National Academy study on firearms and violence was not $900,000 but $109,000, a piece of a much larger funding picture; other grants came from the National Institute of Justice, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the Packard Foundation. The last two are among the dozens of foundations that support research on critical issues by the National Academy each year.

Mary O'Connell
The Joyce Foundation
Chicago, Ill.



MR. SINISTER?

David Frum's otherwise excellent review of Conrad Black's new biography of Nixon ("Trial by Fire," February 11) was tainted by the usual smears that filled the papers of my youth. Yes, Nixon was "dark." Yes, he was "cynical." But "sinister"? And "in many ways"? Oh please! I might as well have been reading a book review by Oliver Stone.

Mark T. Risner
Irvine, Calif.

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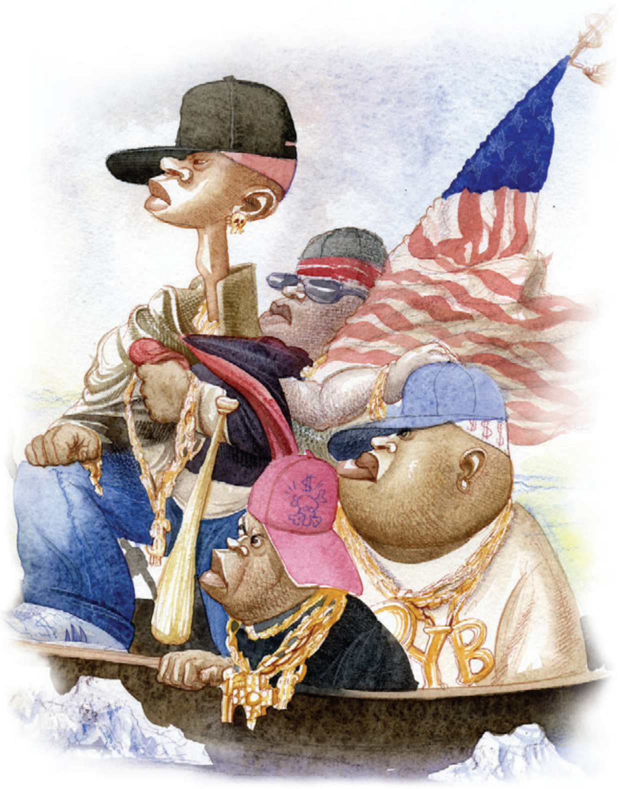
THE WEEK

■ To make her really proud, will we have to give him a landslide?

■ Mike Huckabee joked that he would continue his presidential campaign since it is not distracting him from anything more pressing, such as a day job. It has been pointed out to him that even if he won all of the remaining delegates to the Republican convention, he would not have enough to win the nomination. His reply: “I didn’t major in math. I majored in miracles.” Actually, McCain has cornered the market in miracles this primary season. Huckabee’s cheerful scoffing at reality is, however, entirely in keeping with his candidacy, and betrays a certain folksy contempt for his own supporters.

■ American intelligence operations are being held hostage by House Democrats and a secret ruling issued by an unknown federal judge. The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, adopted by a Democratic Congress in the wake of Watergate, is intended to give Americans at home due-process protection from national-security surveillance. But modern technology means that many communications—say, an e-mail from Kandahar to Fallujah—pass through U.S.-based infrastructure. The FISA court issued a classified ruling that all intercepts must be treated the same way as phone taps involving U.S. citizens. Last year Congress mitigated the impact of this eccentric decision by passing the Protect America Act, which made explicit that FISA restrictions did not protect foreign-to-foreign communications. But that law has now expired, and House Democrats have blocked its renewal. They object to a section of the bill that would exempt U.S. telecom companies that cooperated with intelligence operations in the wake of 9/11 from multibillion-dollar lawsuits. In the run-up to the 2002 elections, many Democrats thought they were going to make gains. But they ended up paying a price for putting the demands of public-sector unions ahead of national security. Putting trial lawyers first should not play any better.

■ The Clintons worked up a tsunami of outrage over MSNBC correspondent David Shuster’s use of the term “pimped out” in a question about Chelsea’s role in her mother’s campaign. Reluctant as we are to tempt fate by using the words “Clinton” and “pimp” in close proximity—one never knows *exactly* what the former president has been up to—it seems to us that this is an egregious episode of media hypocrisy. MSNBC’s own Keith Olbermann, the snarling darling of the Democrats, has used the offending participle to describe President Bush’s relationship with Gen. David Petraeus: “And in pimping Gen. David Petraeus, sir, in violation of everything this country has been assiduously and vigilantly against for 220 years . . .” Senator Clinton rushed in to coddle her daughter, declaring: “I will always be a mom first and a public official second.” Surely they’re snickering over that statement in Baluchistan. Chelsea is pushing 30: She’s a big girl now. Hillary is a big girl too, and should start acting like one if she wants to be commander in chief.



Now on display at the National Portrait Gallery (see page 12)

ROMAN GENN

■ President Bush has asked Congress to reauthorize the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and to double its budget, from $15 billion to $30 billion spread across a five-year period. Questions exist about the efficiency of such programs. Preventing new HIV infections is the only way to win the battle against AIDS in Africa, and there are strong indications that the organizations best equipped to do that are small, home-grown entities run by Africans themselves and bearing little resemblance to the public-health industry that jockeys for lucrative PEPFAR grants. But one number speaks for itself: Since 2003, 1.3 million of the world’s most destitute people, many of them the innocent wives and children of profligate men, have received the anti-retroviral treatment that works what has been called “the Lazarus effect” on AIDS sufferers. It’s an open question whether saving the lives of the poorest and most politically voiceless in Africa will be a PR gain for America, but Bush wonders why any further return is needed on

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—Eric Hanushek, Dean Jamison,
Eliot Jamison, and Ludger Woessmann

The Politics of Charter School Enrollment

Today, more than 1.2 million U.S. schoolchildren attend more than 4,000 public charter schools. But the success of the charter school movement has been as uneven as it has been widespread. There are remarkable differences in the number of charter schools and enrollment between states and even between school districts within the same state. This patchwork pattern of success raised two big questions in our minds. What factors led some states to grant charter schools a great deal of latitude and provide solid financial support, whereas others adopted less permissive legislation? And why, even among states with similar enabling legislation, do charter schools flourish in some places but not in others?

—Christiana Stoddard and Sean Corcoran

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THE WEEK...

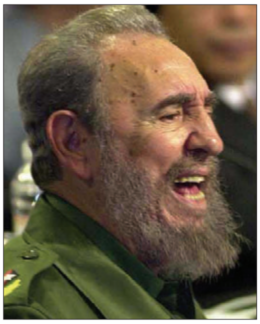
the investment to justify its continuation—as he put it, "to whom much is given, much is required." At least in the case of PEPFAR, we agree.

■ Barack Obama is famously light on legislative achievements, and the one big bill with his name on it is bad news. As with many on the left, Obama's heart is hostage to the United Nations, and his bill, the Global Poverty Act, would oblige the United States to increase its already generous foreign-aid payments by nearly $1 trillion over a dozen years—on top of what we already give. (As recently as 1987, the entire federal budget was less than $1 trillion.) The payments are in line with the goals articulated in the U.N.'s "Millennium Declaration." Jeffrey Sachs, the head of the U.N.'s Millennium Project, has suggested that these additional foreign-aid payments should be funded with a gasoline tax. Foreign aid is a corrupt and corrupting enterprise. From the U.N.'s felonious management of the "oil for food" program to the misuse of aid money to enrich brutish dictators and their armies, foreign aid often ends up hurting the poor people of the world rather than helping them. Obama's plan to put a trillion-dollar burden on American taxpayers to curry favor with the United Nations should be rejected.

■ *City Journal*, the Manhattan Institute's fine publication, kicked off a useful debate by running Sol Stern's essay "School Choice Isn't Enough." Stern is for charter schools, vouchers, and other efforts to bring competition to education, but he believes that school reformers should place less emphasis on competition and more on raising standards. After all, most school kids are going to stay in the public system no matter how much school choice there is. And as Stern reads the evidence, vouchers have helped the students who use them without doing much to improve the public schools those students left behind. To our mind, Stern marks too great a division between those he calls "incentivists" and those he calls "instructionists." He discounts the possibility that their agendas are complementary: that marginal increases in competition will lead schools to adopt better methods of teaching and higher standards. He does not ponder whether the public schools have so often adopted faddish and ineffective techniques precisely because they are not subject to the test of the market. But on the question of whether school choice is enough—whether it is adequate to serve as the entirety of a conservative platform on education—he is absolutely correct. We should work, as he suggests, to strengthen curricula, so long as we remember that school choice is, among other things, a means toward that end.

■ The list of professions in which steroid use is common has expanded way beyond athletes to include rappers, models, and even ballerinas. Just about the only occupational group that has not been implicated is politicians, and no wonder; they need no help in making their heads swell. Case in point: The recent congressional investigations of steroids in baseball and of the New England Patriots' taping of opposing teams' signals. To be sure, drug abuse is a serious issue, and as for the Patriots, they have not done anything so depraved since they sent out a snowplow to clear the ground for their field-goal kicker in a 3–0 victory in 1982. Still, does Congress have to get involved? We search the Constitution in vain for any mention of sports.

■ The Bush administration's decision to try to shoot down a hobbled spy satellite has drawn plenty of complaints from the disarmament lobby. "The politics are terrible," groused Jeffrey G. Lewis of the New America Foundation, explained to the *New York Times*. Terrible, that is, for the liberal foes of missile defense. A successful effort at shielding populated areas from a man-made device that falls from space—a category that includes ICBMs—would counter many of the arguments they've made since Ted Kennedy started throwing around the term "Star Wars" as an insult. As for the satellite in question, much of it will burn up as it reenters the atmosphere. Yet half a ton of hydrazine (rocket fuel that can be lethal if inhaled) may survive. The chance of a disaster is small but not negligible. So it makes sense for the U.S. military to put its embryonic missile-defense system to work. A bull's-eye would guarantee that the hydrazine drops harmlessly into the Pacific Ocean. Separately, it would show Iran, North Korea, and other potential adversaries that we have developed sophisticated anti-ballistic technologies. By sheer coincidence, March 23 is the 25th anniversary of Ronald Reagan's speech on the Strategic Defense Initiative. Let's hit one for the Gipper by then.



SIPA/NEWSCOM

■ Fidel Castro has been one of the cruelest dictators in living memory. He has also been the longest-"serving," and is now "retiring," just short of his 50th year in power. Senator Fulbright said famously that Castro "is a thorn in the flesh," but not "a dagger in the heart." That may be true as far as the United States is concerned, although Castro allowed his territory to serve as a base for Soviet missiles, and supported Communist insurgencies around the world. That he has been a dagger in the heart of the Cuban people is unquestionable. His economic policies have immiserated them, and his dungeons are filled with those who dare to dissent. The names of these political prisoners are virtually unknown—although President Bush did his best last year when he gave one such prisoner, Dr. Oscar Elías Biscet, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. May names such as Biscet's shine in the future, and may Castro's molder in the dust.

■ Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf has confounded his enemies foreign and domestic by neither rigging nor canceling the general election. It would have been easy for him to fix the polls, and in keeping not just with his overblown reputation as a sinister Latin American–style dictator, but also with Pakistani democratic norms. Prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a great progressive hero, famously rigged the 1977 election (even though he would have won it anyway). Instead, Musharraf has played relatively fair. His security forces, moreover, were able to ensure that the elections were not disrupted by terrorist

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bombs or a more than usually high level of violence. For a president accused of both authoritarianism and incompetence it was an impressive achievement. It will be interesting to see if the leaders of the country's victorious opposition parties can turn over their own new leaves and form a relatively competent, honest, and public-spirited government. (Low turnout evinced the population's deep and justified skepticism about the political class.) Musharraf's allies did so poorly against the country's two main opposition parties that Musharraf may not survive either as president or as the country's dominant political figure. Benazir Bhutto's sinister widower, Asif Ali Zardari, who inherited her political party, the PPP, seems willing to form a coalition government with his late wife's archenemy, former prime minister and Saudi Arabian protégé Nawaz Sharif. At that point an impeachment will be likely, as also the release from house arrest of nuclear-secrets thief A. Q. Khan.

■ Kosovo is the seventh and last fragment of the old Communist Yugoslavia to become a sovereign state. The Yugoslav breakup unleashed nationalist passions, genocide, and armed intervention from outside: in the case of Kosovo, nothing less than occupation by NATO. Nine in ten of the 2 million Kosovars are Muslim Albanians. They pushed for independence—often violently—even before Slobodan Milosevic committed his outrages against them, and could not have been persuaded to accept anything less. But the Kosovar minority are Orthodox Serbs. They greatly resent being dispossessed of what they see as their ancestral lands, as well as the reprisals that Kosovar Albanians have inflicted on them since NATO's intervention. So the rejoicing in Pristina, the Kosovar capital, is being answered with angry demonstrations in Belgrade, the Serb capital. Worth watching in the third ring is Russia, which

REAGAN: MIRRORPIX/NEWSCOM OBAMA: CHRIS FITZGERALD/CANDIDATEPHOTOS/NEWSCOM

Dreams from His Eugenicists

LAST year, *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman started a big debate by waxing righteous about the Republican party's allegedly racist past. He charged that Ronald Reagan's 1980 campaign was born in racism and that the Gipper's admirers have been tainted ever since as a result. The lynchpin of his argument: Shortly after he was nominated at the GOP convention, Reagan gave a 15-minute speech at the Neshoba County Fair near Philadelphia, Miss. (It was in Philadelphia that, 16 years earlier, three civil-rights activists had been murdered by segregationist thugs.)

The speech was almost entirely about economics—Jimmy Carter's failed policies and the like—and was delivered in Reagan's typically jovial style. Somewhere along the way he also said that he favored states' rights—something he'd said many times before, and would say many times after. But, as you may know, "states' rights" is an abracadabra phrase. It magically reveals that the speaker wants to make black folk drink from separate water fountains.

I bring this up because, on the night Barack Obama won the "Chesapeake primary," he held a victory rally at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, at which he declared: "And where better to affirm our ideals than here in Wisconsin, where a century ago the progressive movement was born?"

Now some readers may be aware that I recently wrote a book arguing that American progressives shared emotional, philosophical, and political affinities with European fascists. But put that aside. Let us instead ask: What did the progressives at the University of Wisconsin believe in?

The president of the university during its heyday as the laboratory of progressivism was Charles Van Hise. A devoted eugenicist, he explained that "he who thinks not of himself primarily, but of his race, and of its future, is the new patriot." Additionally, "we know enough about eugenics so that if the knowledge were applied, the defective classes would disappear within a generation."

The most famous intellectual at the University of Wisconsin was arguably E. A. Ross, coiner of the phrase "race suicide" and one of America's leading "raceologists." "The theory that races are virtually equal in capacity," quoth Ross, "leads to such monumental follies as lining the valleys of the South with the bones of half a million picked whites in order to improve the condition of four million unpicked blacks."

Ross was hardly alone. Virtually all of the economic policies Obama favors today can be traced back to the efforts of academics at the University of Wisconsin, who helped create the modern welfare state, but did so in the hope of weeding out the dark, the dusky, and the otherwise unfit from the white man's genetic garden. The politics of these progressive intellectuals conformed perfectly to the worst caricatures of George W. Bush. They instituted loyalty oaths, accused opponents of World War I of treason, and saw in militarism the best hope for organizing society.

Reagan was no racist for supporting states' rights; he was a lover of freedom. And Obama is no villain for proclaiming his indebtedness to the progressives at the University of Wisconsin. But the question remains: Why am I a racist because Ronald Reagan believed in federalism, while Barack Obama is an idealist for invoking a bunch of jingoists, racists, and eugenicists who could not have fathomed that anyone with Barack Obama's skin color might be qualified for the White House?

—JONAH GOLDBERG

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THE WEEK...

has a history of backing the Serbs through thick and thin. Already searching to finance and even arm separatist groups that would hurt Western interests, Vladimir Putin has a glittering new arena in which to advance his version of the Cold War.

■ As every high-school student who has read *The Crucible* knows, witches were executed in Massachusetts as late as 1692. But colonial Massachusetts had politics, law, public opinion, and intellectual inquiry, if not full freedom of thought: social forces that helped turn the tide against witchcraft prosecutions when the frenzy had worn off. What does Saudi Arabia have, and can it save Fawza Falih—an illiterate woman accused of witchcraft for, among other things, causing one of her accusers to become impotent? Miss Falih was arrested by religious police in 2005 and forced to sign a confession she could not read. She was sentenced to be beheaded, reprieved, then sentenced again in the name of "public interest." The world's interest in her case might save her; Human Rights Watch has appealed to King Abdullah to intercede. But Saudi Arabia continues its barbarous ways, making life wretched for who knows how many of its subjects.

■ The Vancouver Public Library has scheduled a talk by Greg Felton, author of *The Host and the Parasite: How Israel's Fifth Column Consumed America*. The book is pretty much what you'd expect; Felton praises "sacrifice bombings" and suggests "a zionist connection to the WTC collapse." Vancouver's head librarian says he invited Felton because "his book was provocative but not hateful and we have found no information indicating the book is subject to any legal action." One might argue with "not hateful," and, in any case, such an undemanding standard could be met just as easily with a debate over 4-on-4 overtime in hockey—but wait a minute, what's that about legal action? Oh, yes: Canada has a tribunal to prosecute authors whose work might hurt the feelings of certain ethnic groups. NATIONAL REVIEW's own Mark Steyn has written such a book (*America Alone*) about Islamic extremism, and he is now being pursued by the Orwellianly named Human Rights Commission. If Canadians are so sensitive, why subject them to Felton's ravings? Because, says the librarian, it's "relevant for Freedom to Read Week." Of course—Freedom to Read Week. Now we understand. Say what you will about the Canadians, but you have to admire their robust sense of humor.

■ Kids' TV characters have a rough go of it in the Gaza Strip. Farfour the Mouse was beaten to death by an Israeli soldier, and Nahoul the Bee died a martyr when he could not get to Egypt for medical attention. But fear not, jihadi children: Assud the Bunny is here, carrying "the Key of Return," ready to liberate Jerusalem from "the filth of those Zionists." But what if ratings should sag—how might Assud meet his maker? It's tempting to imagine something innocuous—ringworm, enteritis—but more likely still is that the jolly jihadist will reach the same sanguinary end he is pushing on a generation of watching Gazans.

■ Cindy Sheehan emerged from obscurity, but not from obloquy, when she took her one-woman show all the way to the streets of Cairo. That mother of a slain soldier is pushing for an end to military trials for members of the Muslim Brotherhood, the international group whose members populate al-Qaeda and founded Hamas. Sheehan didn't seem to mind that her Brotherhood minders ("always nicely garbed in Western suits") wiped off their hands after shaking hers to ward off the contamination of her touch. Does she not know that leaders of the Brotherhood have called the killing of American troops and civilians in Iraq a religious obligation? Does she not care? The capital of her grief long spent, Sheehan has now shaken hands with and given solace to her enemies, the men who stole away her son and begat her hapless campaign.

NEWSCOM

■ The New York Philharmonic decided to accept an invitation from the regime of Kim Jong Il to play a concert in Pyongyang. That was controversial: Conscientious people made arguments for and against. But, right before leaving, Lorin Maazel, the orchestra's music director, had to go and make the whole experience stink to high heaven. Here's what he told the press: "People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw bricks, should they? Is our standing as a country—the United States—is our reputation all that clean when it comes to prisoners and the way they are treated? Have we set an example that should be emulated all over the world? If we can answer that question honestly, I think we can then stop being judgmental about the errors made by others." That may be the most grotesque instance of moral equivalence since the Cold War. In fact, we don't recall using the term "moral equivalence" much since the Cold War. Maestro Maazel is a brilliant musician, and, for him, the Wagner Rule is in effect: Think of the art. If you think about the rest, you can only shudder, sigh, and despair.

■ John L. Esposito, professor of Islamic studies at Georgetown, typifies his discipline. What he says, others say and more are taught, albeit with less voltage. He came to Stanford recently, and Campus Watch, a pro-Israel, anti-radical group, reported on his talk. What did he say? He cited a forthcoming book—*Who Speaks for Islam?*—which claims that Muslim anti-Americanism flows from "disappointment" that we aren't "living up to [our] ideals," and resentment that "Islam is denigrated" here. (But if one of our ideals is free expression, how can the latter be stopped?) He said all religions have their terrorists, e.g., "Christians blowing up abortion clinics." He argued that Islamic terrorism is a reaction to "neo-colonial powers," "neo" being the adjective that allows one to say "colonial" when there are no colonies. He compared Bernard Lewis to Darth Vader. There you have it: nine parts evasion, one part bitchiness. And parents pay $40,000 a year for this.

■ *New Republic* contributor Debbie Nathan offers the following career update on her blog: "I'm presenting my new

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NR1107

book *Pornography*. It was published late last year by Groundwood, a Canadian children's press." *Children's* press?

■ The Eric Breindel Award for Excellence in Journalism is given once a year, to a journalist who exhibits "love of country and its democratic institutions" and "bears witness to the evils of totalitarianism." The award is worth $20,000. There is a second award, for college and university journalism, worth $10,000 (and the same principles apply). For more information, please contact Germaine Febles at (212) 843-8031 or GFebles@Rubenstein.com. The deadline for the main award is April 18, and for the student award, April 25.

■ The Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery is running an exhibition titled "Recognize! Hip Hop and Contemporary Portraiture." In addition to some faithfully reproduced graffiti and some gibberish "poems," it includes "patterned paintings of young African American men wearing the latest in hip hop street fashion." But fear not for tradition: "The theatrical poses and objects in the portraits are based on well-known images of powerful figures drawn from seventeenth- through nineteenth-century Western art." Come again? They "posit young black men, fashioned in urban attire, within the field of power reminiscent of Renaissance artists such as Tiepolo and Titian." Contemporary painters commit worse sins than kitsch, and to the artist and his field of power we wish the best. For our part, though, we'll posit Titian without the bling.

■ Rep. Tom Lantos (D., Calif.) belonged to the greatest generation—with a twist. He was 16 when the Nazis occupied Hungary: a fascist ally that had not, however, until then exterminated its Jews. As the Nazis set about remedying that omission, Lantos joined the underground, was captured, escaped, and survived in a Budapest safe house under the aegis of Raoul Wallenberg. He came to America in 1947—"an American by choice," he called himself—and became an economics professor. He won his first congressional race in 1980. He was a down-the-line liberal, with a passion for human rights that often took him away from the line—criticizing Communist China, getting arrested outside the Sudanese consulate for protesting Darfur. He angered some Dutch legislators by telling them that Europe was angrier over Guantanamo than it had been over Auschwitz—as he had reason to know. Dead at 80. R.I.P.

■ The Lord told Moses that, after he died, the people would "go a whoring after the gods of the strangers." And even the godlets. In 1968, the Beatles, Mia Farrow, Mike Love of the Beach Boys, and Donovan trekked to the ashram of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, a middle-aged Indian holy man. It was a trip of its moment, as much as the facial hair the young men sported: spiritual tourism, wisdom of the East, self-hatred, condescension. The Beatles left in a huff: "We made a mistake," Paul McCartney admitted. "We thought there was more to him than there was." But the Maharishi was off, onto the magazines and TV screens of the West. He did have more to him, as it turned out—Transcendental Meditation, a system of breathing and focusing that does appear to reduce stress, and that became a big business. Other schemes of his—yogic flying; a $10 trillion project to end world poverty through organic farming—didn't pan out. Dead at 91, unless he was 96 or 97 (his birthdate is unclear). R.I.P.

■ Ruth Stafford Peale survived her husband, the Rev. Norman Vincent Peale, by 14 years. She was a very consequential part of her husband's very consequential life. The magazine *Guideposts* (circulation: 2.5 million) began with her suggestion that he publish his sermons. She rescued the manuscript of *The Power of Positive Thinking* (20 million copies sold so far) from the wastebasket, where he had thrown it in despair over one more rejection letter. "I don't have as much self-doubt as he did," she once said. Peale's ministry struck many who had not experienced it as bland mid-century boosterism, but it was founded on faith and a desire to make things better: God plus Benjamin Franklin, a very American combination. Dead, age 101. R.I.P.

2008

Peace on the Right

THE percentage of Americans who consider themselves Republicans has plummeted. Young people voted for John Kerry and have not become more conservative since 2004. Democrats think they just might get a filibuster-proof Senate capable of enacting national health care and confirming liberal justices to the Supreme Court in 2009. Thus many conservatives have decided that now is a good time to turn on each other in a fight as bitter as it is counterproductive.

Partisans of John McCain say his conservative critics are "deranged." They say those critics are merely trying to get attention for themselves. The talk-show hosts who dislike McCain, they say, are irrelevant—when they are not saying those hosts will cost Republicans the election and thus endanger the national defense. The critics, meanwhile, say McCain's nomination will ruin the party. They say he is not a conservative—and some of them go so far as to argue that neither is anyone who supports him.

Enough. It is not "deranged" to have concerns about McCain's positions and his political style. Nor is it a betrayal of conservative principles to support him, especially now that he is the all-but-certain Republican nominee. Conservatives can reach differing views of McCain in good faith. Each camp needs to accept that truth.

Most Republican voters have taken a sensible view of this question. A recent Gallup poll showed that nearly half of them would have preferred someone else as the nominee. (Us too.) But most Republicans, and most conservatives, nonetheless have a favorable view of McCain, who after all has a mostly conservative record. Mitt Romney, in his gracious endorsement

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of McCain, put a bitter campaign behind him. Surely conservatives who have not been personally at odds with the senator can do the same.

Other conservatives are trying to play a more constructive role than the feuders. They want McCain to move rightward—they have compiled lists of suggestions, and sometimes demands—while conservatives reconcile themselves to him. We're not sure either side will or should budge much. McCain is not going to embrace drilling in the Alaskan reserve, but there is no reason conservatives should stop thinking he is wrong, or supporting congressmen who act on that thought.

There are, on the other hand, areas where McCain can modify his approach in a way that will cheer conservatives without compromising his convictions or undermining his appeal to independent voters. Making a firmer commitment to pursue "enforcement first" on immigration would be one such way. Emphasizing some of his conservative positions, and making a credible promise to fight for them, is another.

Conservatives and McCain should neither pretend that we have no differences nor obsess about those differences. We should instead work on the common task of building a center-right majority in this election year and future ones, each appreciating that the other will play a different role in that task. So we ask the senator, and his conservative supporters and critics: Any takers?

2008 II

Flight to the Feckless

Barack Obama's solid win in Wisconsin—a potential battleground state in the fall—coupled with his favorite-son victory in Hawaii takes him one step nearer the Democratic nomination. It is increasingly hard to see how Hillary Clinton can catch up.

She would need convincing victories in Texas, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, the three remaining big states, but every Obama win in a small state disheartens her supporters and peels off the undecided. Conventional wisdom held that the super-delegates—chosen not by voters or caucus goers, but by virtue of their status as party *machers*—were her strategic reserve. That seems so early-February. What politician will want to defy his constituents? Can Democrats, who have spent the last seven years steaming over *Bush* v. *Gore*, accept any legitimacy other than nose-counting? The Clintonites make a plebiscitary argument of their own when they ask to count the votes of Florida and Michigan, states penalized for jumping ahead in the primary calendar, which Mrs. Clinton contested anyway. This would be such a blatant rule change that they have made little headway.

The Democratic party is caught in a spasm. The endorphin rush of Obama supporters—some of whom tend to faint at his appearances—is so marked that it has drawn parodists (journalist Timothy Noah keeps an online "Obama Messiah Watch"). But the phenomenon marches on. "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive," as Wordsworth wrote of the French Revolution, "but to be young was very heaven!" Or young at heart.

Some soft spots have shown in the new frontrunner though. The paragraph that appeared in several speeches, and that turned out to be lifted from Massachusetts governor Deval Patrick, is a small thing—except that Obama is widely hailed for his rhetoric, and the words he borrowed concerned the power of words. (Why not write your own then?) When Michelle Obama said that her husband's good fortune made her proud of America "for the first time in my adult life," she laid down a marker of contempt, narcissism, and foot-in-mouth.

It will be John McCain's task to make more substantive points. Liberalism has for over 40 years been a flight from substance, as liberals have lost their intellectual and popular moorings. LBJ pushed a mass of legislation through Congress (much of it disastrous). In the mid-Eighties, Gary Hart offered renewal as a candidate of "new ideas," though he had very few. Now Obama simply chants "hope" and "change." To the extent he shows substance, it comes from the left wing of his party. He ran against NAFTA in Wisconsin, and plans to keep doing so in Ohio. In this case "change" means trade barriers.

Liberalism has for over forty years been a flight from substance, as liberals have lost their intellectual and popular moorings.

As Wisconsin and Hawaii prepared to vote, Pakistan finished voting, dealing a rebuke to Pervez Musharraf. Pakistan is slipping out of the War on Terror even as, after great sacrifice, Iraq might be stabilizing. Last summer Candidate Obama suggested invading Pakistan to hunt for bin Laden. The next president may face Pakistani problems beyond Obama's imagining. Should we give the job to a feckless neophyte?

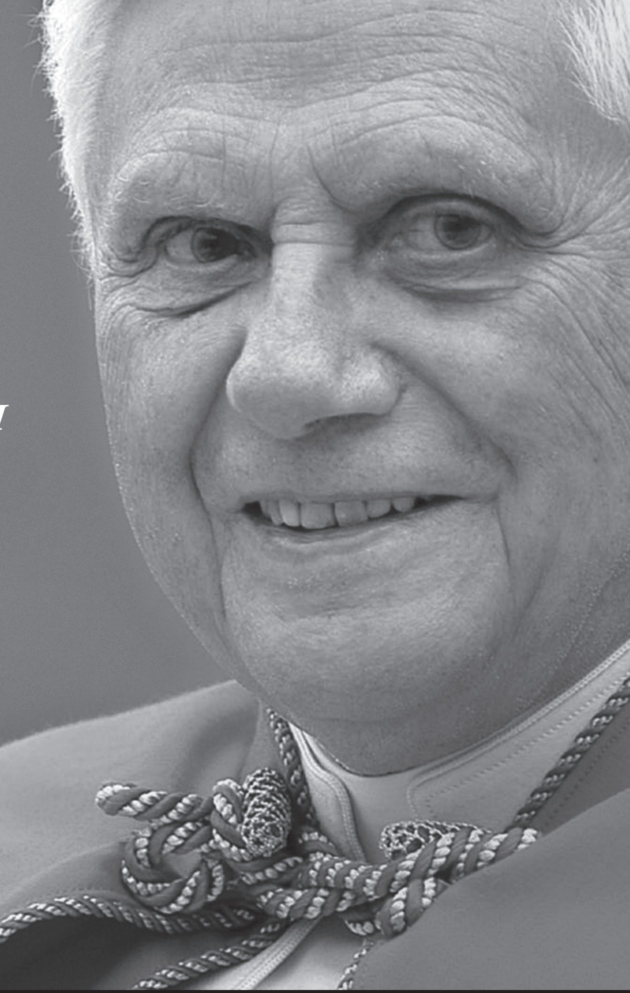
OBITUARY

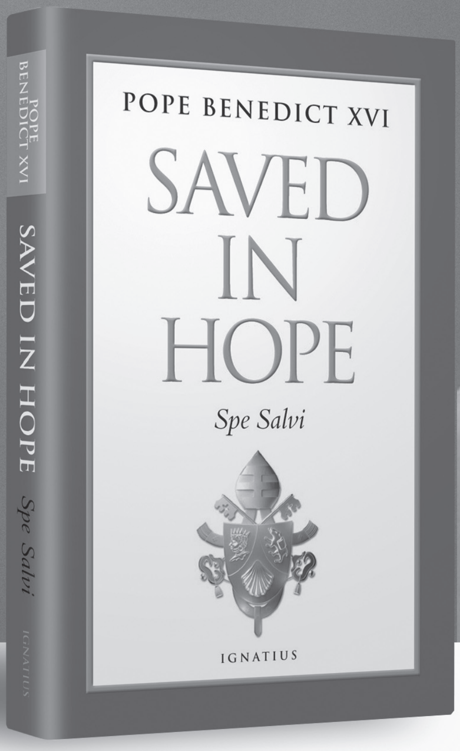
E. Victor Milione, R.I.P.

There wasn't yet a "conservative movement" in the early 1950s, but there was bustling activity on the right side of the political spectrum. The great Austrian economists Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises had come to America, and Leonard Read had launched the Foundation for Economic Education to give their libertarian ("classical liberal") ideas wide exposure. Richard Weaver and Russell Kirk were writing their seminal works, and Henry Regnery was publishing them. *Human Events* and *The Freeman* were bringing conservative analysis to the general public. The 25-year-old Bill Buckley burst on the national scene with *God and Man at Yale* (also published by Regnery), and another Austrian expatriate, Willi Schlamm, started plying Buckley with the idea of a conservative journal—which four years later made its appearance as National Review.

“Confronted by today’s changing and complex panorama, the virtue of hope is subject to harsh trials in the community of believers. For this very reason, we must be apostles who are filled with hope and joyful trust in God’s promises. In contemporary society, which shows such visible signs of secularism, we must not give in to despair.”

— ***Pope Benedict XVI***





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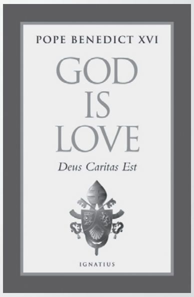

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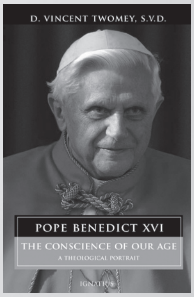

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Another of Buckley's mentors, the libertarian Frank Chodorov (whom WFB later described as a "gentle, elderly anarchist"), recognized that the left-wing ideas criticized in *God and Man* were by no means confined to Yale. The Left was making its long march through the institutions. If the Right was not to cede the next generation, action was needed. In 1953, Chodorov founded the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists, grandly announcing that he had a "fifty-year project" to defeat collectivism in all its manifestations.

At first, though, Chodorov's endeavor was more a hope than a plan. Then he received a windfall donation from a wealthy Midwesterner and made the best investment of his life: He hired a 28-year-old Pennsylvanian named Vic Milione to run ISI and spread the word on the campuses. Chodorov told Milione, "Vic, I have this money and as long as it lasts, you will get $75 a week and expense money. You'll have to take your chances on the future."

Milione took the chance. When the money ran out, he raised more. And he formed a plan to do an end run around the leftists' march. As his eventual successor, Ken Cribb, put it, "If ISI was denied schools, it could have summer schools. If the classroom was out of reach, there was the independent lecture and the seminar. If ISI couldn't assign texts, it could make available alternative libraries of books and journals via the mails." And eventually, the young scholars nurtured by ISI did make their way into positions in the academy. Milione himself, speaking a few years ago about ISI's Weaver Fellowships, pointed out that the recipients among them "have published over 1,000 books—8,000 articles and reviews—and it is estimated that they teach about 50,000 students each year."

Besides making ISI a viable institution, Vic Milione shaped it into a conservative institution.

Besides making ISI a viable institution, Milione shaped it into a conservative institution. Whereas Chodorov was a pure libertarian—in fact, by his own description, a "radical" libertarian—concerned only with protecting freedom from the incursions of government, Milione was devoted to "Western Civilization as well as our specific American Heritage."

He saw to it that ISI fostered a love for that civilization and that heritage among its student members, and among all those, students or not, who bought its books and subscribed to its journals, *The Intercollegiate Review* and *Modern Age*. The change in emphasis, which he had begun with Chodorov's permission while the older man was still president of ISI, was underlined after Chodorov's death, when ISI dropped "individualist" from its name and became the Intercollegiate Studies Institute.

Milione handed his beloved ISI over to Ken Cribb in 1988 and took pleasure in its continued thriving. As his health permitted, he continued to attend ISI functions and meetings of sister organizations such as the Philadelphia Society. His diminutive frame belied the largeness of his vision. With the substitution of just one word, what he said of ISI sums up Vic Milione's own life: "Fifty"—eighty—"years of integrity (meaning both honesty and wholeness) of effort, and diligence, has reaped rich rewards."

OBITUARY II

Robert Jastrow, R.I.P.

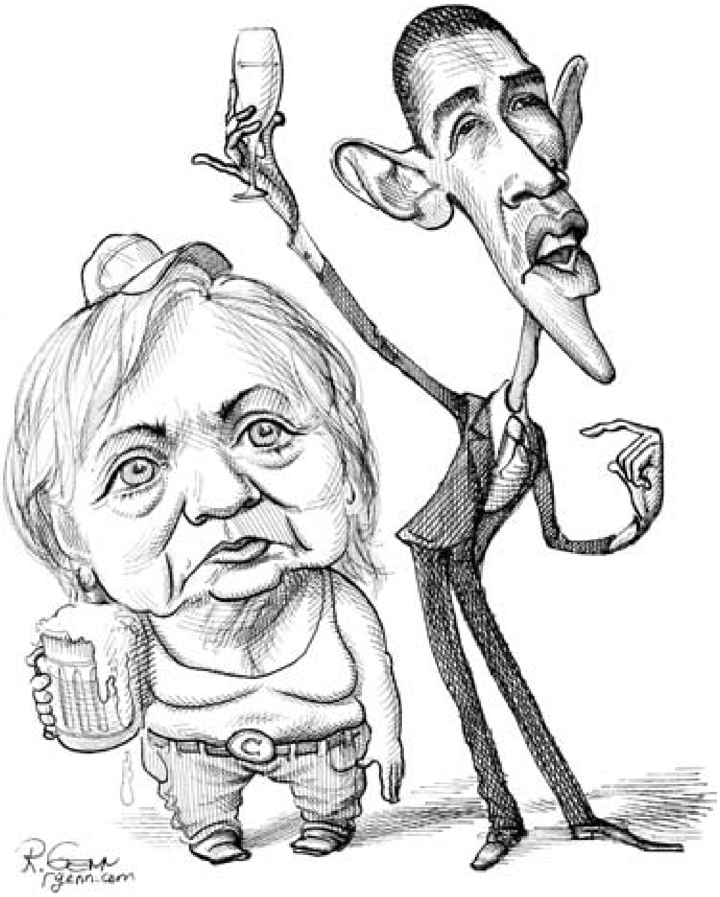
ROBERT JASTROW was a scientist among scientists. The story goes that in the 1950s, during the question period at a seminar organized by Robert Oppenheimer, the young Jastrow stood up to offer an unconventional theory about the behavior of neutrons and protons. Oppenheimer gently ridiculed him at the time; but later, when Jastrow had worked out his idea in a scholarly article, Oppenheimer admitted it fit the data and retracted his criticism.

Jastrow was one of the very first people hired by NASA in 1958, as head of its theoretical division, and in 1961, at age 36, he became the director of its Goddard Institute for Space Studies. He strongly favored the Apollo moon-landing project, for two reasons. As a scientist, he saw the moon as a magnificent source of information about the earth and indeed the whole solar system: Lacking an atmosphere and water, it had not suffered erosion as the earth had, and therefore "has preserved the record of its past for an exceptionally long time." And as an American, he accepted the second reason, the one that carried far more weight with Washington policymakers: "The main point was to refute what some were thinking, 'The U.S. is on the way downhill, and it can't match the Soviets' technological achievements.'"

A scientist among scientists, Jastrow also had the rarer ability to open a window on science to the general public. Starting in 1967 with *Red Giants and White Dwarfs*, he gained a wide reputation for his ability to explain difficult concepts to a nonscientific audience. In 1984 he co-founded an organization, the George C. Marshall Institute, to inform the public on scientific issues relating to public policy. Two of the issues nearest his heart were missile defense and global warming.

It was the debate over President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative that brought Jastrow into NR's orbit (or vice versa). In late 1986 he and several colleagues at the Marshall Institute produced a paper on the technical issues involved in SDI deployment. Impressed, NR asked Jastrow if he would be willing to keep our readers apprised of the scientific progress of the program and the political difficulties it faced, both at home and abroad. He was indeed willing, and the result was a feature that ran in "The Week" for the next two years, titled "SDI Watch," in which we learned about everything from the government's "business as usual" management and procurement procedures, to the importance of a space-based defense that would have the ability to strike at missiles during their launch phase, to the development of "smart rocks" and "brilliant pebbles." One "SDI Watch"—opened at random—offers a beautiful example of Jastrow's explanatory skill: "The fragility of a ballistic missile is not widely appreciated. The Soviet SS-18—the largest ICBM in the world—weighs two hundred tons and stands as tall as a ten-story building, but its aluminum skin is no thicker than cardboard. In fact, the SS-18 is, relatively speaking, as fragile as an eggshell; for both SS-18s and eggs, the ratio of the weight of the container loaded to its weight empty is about 10 to 1."

Profound scientist, inspiring teacher, fearless polemicist: Bob Jastrow did more than most of us know for his country, his students, his friends.



■ 2008 ■

The Warrior and the Priest

How Clinton and Obama divide their party

RAMESH PONNURU

HILLARY CLINTON and Barack Obama fought to a draw on Super Tuesday. They won roughly the same number of delegates, and the popular-vote margin between them was 0.4 percent. But Yuval Levin pointed out something odd at NATIONAL REVIEW ONLINE: In most of the 22 states with elections that day, the results were not at all close. Eleven states were blowouts for Obama: He won eight states by 24 points or more. Seven states gave Clinton lopsided victories.

If you divide the Democratic-primary vote by demographic group instead of state, you see the same pattern. Clinton and Obama have been roughly evenly matched overall, but that parity obscures the strong preferences of different subsets of the voting population. New Mexico was a close election. Two opposing landslides produced that tie: Exit polls showed that Obama took 60 percent of college graduates, while Clinton took 61 percent of voters without a college degree.

The candidates have two different coalitions—you might even say two different parties—within the party. The race has been tight nationally because those coalitions are roughly equal in size. But they are not equal in each state, which is why Clinton and Obama have each had large margins. If Obama pulls away, it will be because Clinton's coalition is surrendering control of the party to his. But even if the nomination does not go to Obama, his coalition probably represents the party's future.

Obama has, almost everywhere, been winning the votes of blacks. Affluent, highly educated voters have been in his corner. Young voters and irreligious voters have been on his side. White men in northern states have voted for him, and so have white women in states that don't have a lot of blacks. (A state with few blacks or a lot of blacks is a good state for Obama.) Independent voters have gone his way.

Clinton draws disproportionate support from white women. Her coalition includes more low-income voters, more union members, more Hispanics, and more white Catholics and Protestants. Older voters have favored her, and so have people who have a history of voting in Democratic primaries. Leave aside Illinois, Arkansas, and New York, which had strong ties to one or the other candidate, and these patterns have held almost everywhere.

Journalist Ron Brownstein wrote an article for the *Los Angeles Times* last spring on the tensions within the Democratic party: "Since the 1960s," he said, "Democratic nominating contests regularly have come down to a struggle between a candidate who draws support primarily from upscale, economically comfortable voters liberal on social and foreign policy issues, and a rival who relies mostly on downscale, financially strained voters drawn to populist economics and somewhat more conservative views on cultural and national security issues."

Democratic strategists, Brownstein noted, alluded to this division by referring to "wine track" and "beer track" candidates. One class of Democratic voters looks for a candidate who will be a "warrior" for their interests. Another class looks for a candidate who will serve as a kind of secular "priest" affirming their values.

Brownstein was right to locate the source of the party's division in the 1960s. Until that time party politics had been organized mostly on economic and sectional lines. In the late 1960s, however, a "new politics" (as it was then called) based on lifestyle and values issues started to come to the fore. Over time many well-off

ROMAN GENN

social liberals left the Republican party for this new Democratic party, and many working-class social conservatives traveled in the reverse direction. The old and new Democratic parties fought bitter battles in 1968 and 1972, battles that contributed to the end of the old Democratic lock on the presidency.

And the battles have continued in muted form ever since. You can trace a line from the old Democratic party of Hubert Humphrey to Walter Mondale to Al Gore and, now, to Clinton. Obama, meanwhile, is leading the party that descends from George McGovern through Gary Hart and Bill Bradley. The old party did not survive unchanged: The coalition Clinton leads is much more socially liberal than the party Humphrey led. But differences of emphasis remain.

Obama's blackness expands the new Democratic party's coalition in two ways. It brings in his fellow black Americans. It also heightens his appeal to the party's natural constituents.

The careful reader will note that most of the new party's candidates lost. Mondale beat Hart, and Gore beat Bradley. Obama is doing better than them in part because of his remarkable political skills. But that's not the only reason he may win the Democratic nomination. The new party has had an enduring weakness: its lack of appeal to black voters. They went heavily for Gore over Bradley, for example. This time, however, the new party's candidate is a black man. Obama's blackness expands the new party's coalition in two ways. It brings in his fellow black Americans. It also heightens his appeal to the party's natural constituents. Well-off liberal white voters are delighted to have the opportunity to vote for a nice black man. The primary contest, then, pits the McGovern-Hart coalition plus blacks against the Humphrey-Mondale coalition plus middle-aged white feminists.

There's another reason Obama is doing better than previous candidates of the new Democratic party. Its constituency has not just recruited new allies; it has also grown larger. We now have a mass upper class. Its material concerns largely met, it can vote for reasons that previous generations would have dismissed as hopelessly ethereal, such as the need to create a new style of politics that brings the country together. Its members have the luxury, that is, of voting for "hope."

Success breeds success. The growth of the McGovern-Hart party has conferred additional advantages on Obama. The Democratic party establishment was pretty solidly in Mondale's corner, and it saved him from the Hart insurgency. But the growth of the new party makes Obama look more like a winner, and as a result he has picked up more establishment support. If he leads in both the delegate count and the popular vote going into a Democratic convention, the "superdelegates"—mostly politicians—will surely ratify his victory. The more inevitable Obama's nomination looks, the more Clinton's natural supporters will be drawn into his camp.

Priestly politics still faces some resistance. It has been widely suggested that anti-black sentiment among Hispanics explains their reluctance to vote for Obama. Perhaps that is true. But it may also be that Hispanics vote on bread-and-butter concerns, and that this inclination also partly explains their hanging back. Hillary Clinton presents her campaign as a fairly straightforward exchange: your vote for her delivery of social services. What Obama is selling is less tangible.

For Clinton, this party history must be awfully bitter. She began her adult political career as a McGovernite, just as her husband did. The young Hillary Clinton—maybe even the Clinton of 1993—probably never saw herself leading the Humphrey forces within the party. When she spoke to her graduating class at Wellesley, she talked about their search for a "more immediate, ecstatic, and penetrating mode of living." In the early 1990s she championed a "politics of meaning." Now the ecstasy, and the vague uplift, belong to her primary opponent. She may be ending her career as a kind of feminist ward heeler. She has reached the apex of the old order at the very moment it is finally crumbling to dust. **NR**

■ 2008 II

Mitt's Closing Act

Will there be a curtain call?

BYRON YORK

A WEEK after dropping out of the Republican presidential race on February 7, Mitt Romney held a meeting with senior staff at his campaign headquarters in Boston. They had a lot of questions to consider. Should Romney endorse John McCain now, or wait awhile? Should he hold on to his delegates to make some sort of statement at the Republican convention? What should his public stance be?

"After he stepped aside, the plan was to use the governor's delegates to have a voice for conservatives at the convention," says one Romney aide who was at the meeting. "But then he asked, 'What's the best way to unite the party right now?'" As his aides sat around the conference table, Romney answered his own question: He should bite the bullet and endorse the man who had been his bitter rival just a few days ago. Romney asked campaign manager Beth Myers to get in touch with the McCain campaign to work out logistics. "We were thinking they would want to do it in Phoenix, or in Texas, and make a big deal about it," the aide recalls. Instead, Myers came back and said McCain wanted to do it now—right now.

And so it was. Romney made the decision at about 12:30 P.M. By 3:30 he was standing next to McCain, who, eager to show the party was uniting behind his candidacy, had hurried to Boston for the news conference. "I am honored today to give my full support to Senator McCain's candidacy for the presidency of the United States," Romney told reporters. "I'm officially endorsing his candidacy. And today I'm asking my delegates to vote for Senator McCain at the convention."

And that was that, a graceful end to the Romney campaign. Now, what is left for Romney is a detailed look at what went wrong (and right) in his two-year effort. The object is not only to better understand

Black Listed Cancer Treatment Could Save Your Life

Baltimore, MD— As unbelievable as it seems the key to stopping many cancers has been around for over 30 years. Yet it has been banned. Blocked. And kept out of your medicine cabinet by the very agency designed to protect your health—the FDA.

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You read that right. He was not only shut down—but also forced out of the country where others benefited from his discovery. That was 39 years ago. How many other treatments have they been allowed to hide? Just as in the case of Dr. Burton's miracle serum these too go unmentioned.

Two-Nutrient Cancer Breakthrough...

Decades ago, European research scientist Dr. Johanna Budwig, a six-time Nobel Award nominee, discovered a totally natural formula that not only protects against the development of cancer, but people all over the world who have been diagnosed with incurable cancer and sent home to die have actually benefited from her research—and now lead normal lives.

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By simply eating a combination of two natural and delicious foods (found on page 134) not only can cancer be prevented—but in case after case it was actually healed! "Symptoms of cancer, liver dysfunction, and diabetes were completely alleviated." Remarkably, what Dr. Budwig discovered was a totally natural way for eradicating cancer.

However, when she went to publish these results so that everyone could benefit—**she was blocked by manufacturers with heavy financial stakes!** For over 10 years now her methods have proved effective—yet she is denied publication—blocked by the giants who don't want you to read her words.

What's more, the world is full of expert minds like Dr. Budwig who have pursued cancer remedies and come up with remarkable natural formulas and diets that work for hundreds and thousands of patients. *How to Fight Cancer & Win* author William Fischer has studied these methods and revealed their secrets for you—so that you or someone you love may be spared the horrors of conventional cancer treatments.

As early as 1947, Virginia Livingston, M.D., isolated a cancer-causing microbe. She noted that every cancer sample analyzed (whether human or other animal) contained it.

Six-time Nobel Nominee's Two-Nutrient Cancer Breakthrough Revealed

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Turn to page 82 of *How to Fight Cancer & Win* for the delicious diet that can help stop the formation of cancer cells and shrink tumors.

They walked away from traditional cancer treatments...and were healed! Throughout the pages of *How to Fight Cancer & Win* you'll meet real people who were diagnosed with cancer—suffered through harsh conventional treatments—turned their backs on so called modern medicine—only to be miraculously healed by natural means! Here is just a sampling of what others have to say about the book.

"I bought *How to Fight Cancer & Win* and this has to be the greatest book I've ever read. I have had astounding results from the easy to understand knowledge found in this book. My whole life has improved drastically and I have done so much for many others. The information goes far beyond the health thinking of today." *—Hugh M.*

"I can't find adequate words to describe my appreciation of your work in providing *How to Fight Cancer & Win*. You had to do an enormous amount of research to bring this vast and most important knowledge to your readers.

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"In my 55 years as a Country Family Physician, I have never read a more 'down to earth,' practical resume of cancer prevention and treatments, than in this book. It needs to be studied worldwide for the prevention of cancer by all researchers who are looking for a cure." *—Edward S., M.D.*

"As a cancer patient who has been battling lymphatic cancer on and off for almost three years now, I was very pleased to stumble across *How to Fight Cancer & Win*. The book was inspiring, well-written and packed with useful information for any cancer patient looking to maximize his or her chances for recovery." *—Romany S.*

"I've been incorporating Dr. Budwig's natural remedy into my diet and have told others about it. Your book is very informative and has information I've never heard about before (and I've read many books on the cancer and nutrition link). Thanks for the wonderful information." *—Molly G.*

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what he has been through; it is also to figure out what lessons might apply to the 2012 campaign if the political planets align in Romney's favor.

Much of the Romney post-mortem involves issues well known to the public. Was Romney done in by the fact that he was a New England governor in a party based in the South and West? Was it that he was a relative unknown? Was it the flip-flops? The Mormon factor? Those are all legitimate questions. But Romney and his advisers are also addressing a bigger, more fundamental issue: Did he really make the case that he should be president?

It was a question that caused considerable debate and controversy behind the scenes in the campaign. Romney began his candidacy by presenting himself as a super-competent CEO who could fix America's ills, especially its economic ills. When he announced his run in February 2007, he chose the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Mich., as his location, standing in front of a new Ford Escape hybrid SUV, an American Motors Rambler from the early 1960s (made when Romney's father was head of the company), and, suspended from cables above, a vintage DC-3 airplane. Some observers initially had trouble deciphering the visual message Romney wanted to send, but the idea was to stress progress, the future, and good old American know-how.

"This place isn't just about automobiles," Romney told the crowd. "It's about innovation. . . . And if there ever was a time when innovation and transformation were needed in government, it's now." Through the rest of his speech, Romney hit that theme over and over; he used some form of the word "transform" 13 times. It was the speechified version of what the Romney team called the "transformational chain," a chart showing Romney's life as an innovator. "It was very simple," says Alex Castellanos, a strategist who began working with Romney in 2006. "He changed business, he changed the Olympics, he transformed Massachusetts. What was next? It wasn't hard to figure out."

A month after the campaign rollout, Castellanos produced a PowerPoint presentation—those seemed to be the rage inside Romney's data-driven world—focusing on the theme of "change." "The 'agent of change in Washington' positioning is now more open to us than ever," the presentation said. "Changing things like Washington is what Mitt Romney is best at. 'Change Washington' lets us bring out the best Mitt Romney."

The idea was to position Romney as a visionary leader who could get things done. The vision element was crucial, because without it Romney would have seemed like another former Massachusetts governor who claimed to be all about competence. "Michael Dukakis said, 'Let's make what we have work better,'" Castellanos explains. "There was no vision of an America transformed, stronger, ready to meet a new generation of challenges."

Romney, according to the plan, would provide the vision to go along with his competence. But by last fall, the "change" theme ran into reality on the ground in Iowa. A campaign with a grand theme became a fight over the issue du jour when Mike Huckabee, the most gifted natural campaigner in the field, began to draw Romney away from his message.

Opponents no more

MATTHEW HEALEY/UPI

At the time Romney was fighting Huckabee, he also began to suffer from dissent within his ranks. To supplement Castellanos, he brought in another team of media advisers, Stuart Stevens and Russ Schriefer. They had worked Massachusetts Republican races with previous governors Bill Weld and Paul Cellucci, and had helped lots of other high-profile candidates nationwide. The two strategy teams were soon in conflict, disagreeing on all sorts of things.

It was a distraction for the campaign. "The debate among the consultants got to the point where the debate became about the debate," says one Romney insider who wasn't affiliated with either side. "The fight was over who was going to win the fight. A lot of it became pride of authorship rather than what was the best direction for the campaign." A second unaffiliated Romney adviser says, "We just sort of had paralysis when those guys came in."

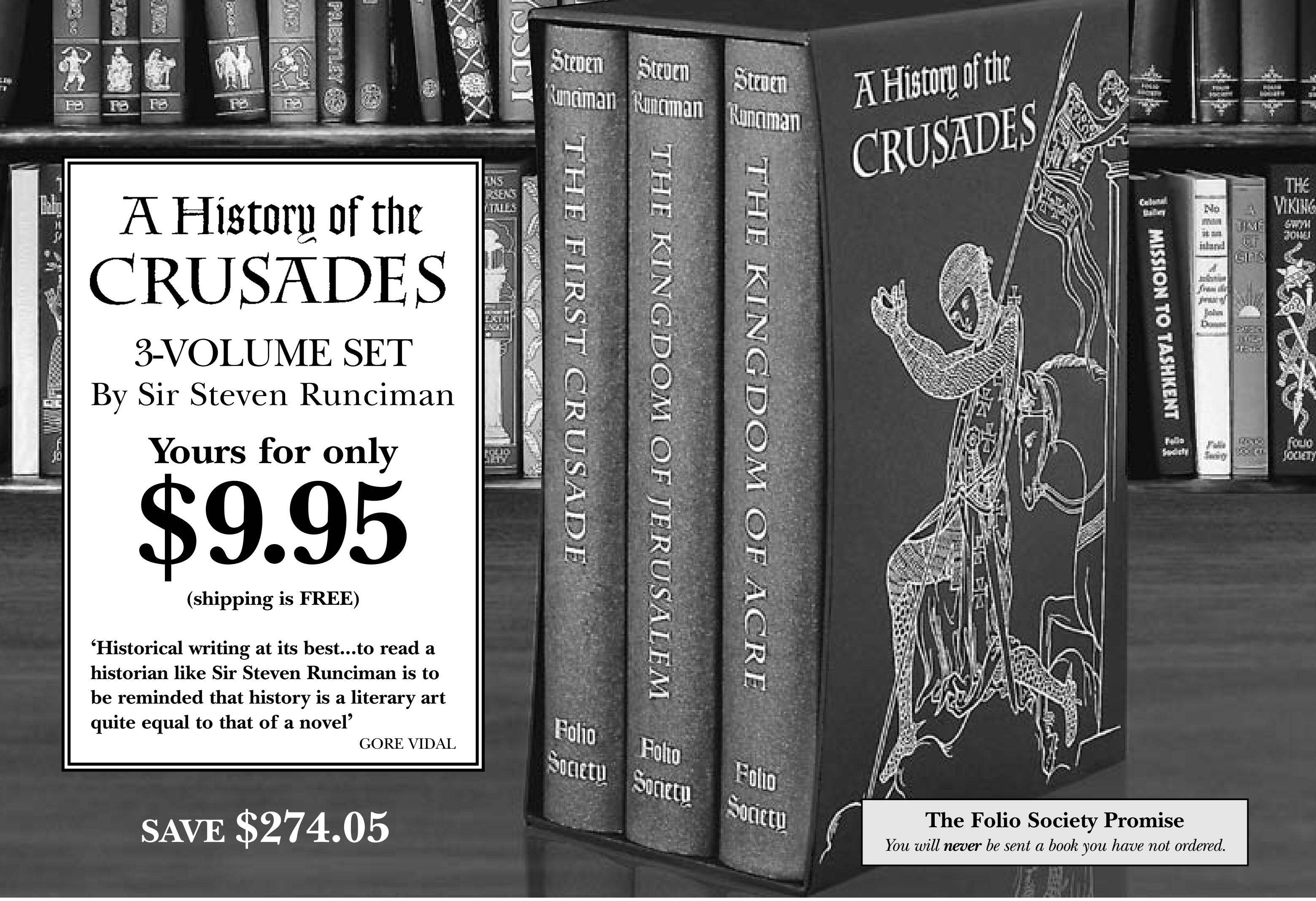
For awhile, that meant Romney ran a somewhat static frontrunner campaign in Iowa, leaving the threat from Huckabee unanswered. And then, when the team did react, Romney the visionary leader became a bit less visible, and Romney the immigration hardliner, social conservative, and negative campaigner came closer to the spotlight.

Castellanos believes the campaign lost its way, at least a bit. But Stevens says the change wasn't really the result of a debate inside the campaign; it was a reaction to what voters were demanding. "They were interested in social issues, in the combination of issues that threatened the family structure, from crystal meth to Internet porn to gay marriage," he says. "Those issues weren't important [simply] because Mike Huckabee was talking about them. No, this was what that group of voters was interested in, and I think it would have been the height of arrogance to tell them, 'No, you shouldn't be interested in those issues,' just as it would have been the height of arrogance to go to Michigan and tell them, 'You shouldn't worry about the death of the heartland; you should worry about global warming.' I mean, voters determine the landscape of the campaign."

And the voters gave Romney a loss in Iowa. By the time he arrived in New Hampshire, the day after that defeat, he began to return to the themes he had hit at the Henry Ford Museum nearly a year earlier. We've got to change Washington, Romney told voters. It's broken, and I'm the man to fix it.

But the change—dictated in part by the ongoing debate inside the campaign and in part by the far different political conditions in Iowa and New Hampshire—made Romney more vulnerable to the charge that he will tell voters whatever he thinks they want to hear.

And so he lost, though he went out on a positive note. Most observers believe Romney is well positioned for 2012, should John McCain lose the general election. But before he can run again, Romney will have to answer—apart from all consultants and advisers—the most fundamental question of all: Why should he be president? **NR**



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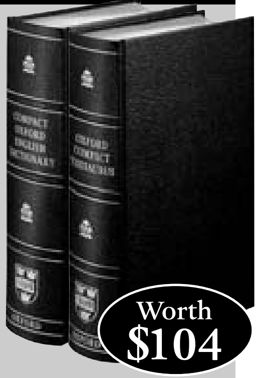

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AT WAR

A Most Dangerous Game

House Democrats continue to hobble our intelligence services

ANDREW C. McCARTHY

When the clock struck midnight on the evening of Saturday, February 16, American intelligence services were for all practical purposes shorn of their ability to monitor the communications of newly discovered terrorists and spies operating outside the United States. House Democrats had simply not found time to consider straightforward legislation—a bipartisan bill that had passed the Democrat-controlled Senate by a 2–1 margin—that would have given our intelligence agencies the ability to continue monitoring communications among terrorists.

> In the digital age, communications travel through global networks, and a call or e-mail from Afghanistan to Iraq is likely to pass through U.S.-based communications hubs.

Here are the facts. Before February 17, U.S. intelligence agencies operated without restriction when eavesdropping on foreigners who communicated with each other outside the United States. Persons who are neither Americans nor acting within U.S. borders do not have privacy protection under U.S. law. The NSA and CIA were thus able to monitor our enemies without being subject to the practical impossibility of justifying each instance of surveillance in the fashion specified by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA).

FISA's authors took pains to distinguish foreign from domestic surveillance, and intended their legislation to apply only to the latter. Unfortunately, rather than using straightforward terms such as "domestic" and "foreign," they referred to "wire" and "radio" communications. This was a function of 1970s communication technology: "Wire" meant domestic telephone calls, and FISA was to govern the interception of calls inside the U.S., thus shielding Americans from unauthorized surveillance. But the intelligence services had a free hand when intercepting microwave or radio transmissions outside the U.S. (the focus of NSA satellites).

This distinction has, however, been overtaken by new technologies. In the digital age, communications travel through global networks, and a call or e-mail from Afghanistan to Iraq is likely to pass through U.S.-based communications hubs. The fact that bits of information are zooming through American switches does not make such a communication domestic instead of foreign. But it did give a judge on the FISA court—the secret tribunal created by FISA to oversee domestic intelligence-gathering—the justification to rationalize, in early 2007, that any communication was now potentially a "wire" communication, and hence subject to the court's jurisdiction.

Suddenly tens of thousands—potentially millions—of foreign-to-foreign communications were brought under FISA's sclerotic protocols. If the CIA and NSA wished to conduct surveillance of such communications, they would now have to demonstrate that they had probable cause to believe that the target of surveillance was an agent of a foreign power. They would have to provide a written account of their evidence, explain the "minimization procedures" in place to assure that eavesdropping was limited to relevant conversations, and offer, in the statute's language, "a detailed description of the nature of the information sought and the type of communications or activities to be subjected to the surveillance." They would have to provide certifications from

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Mr. McCarthy directs the Center for Law & Counterterrorism at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

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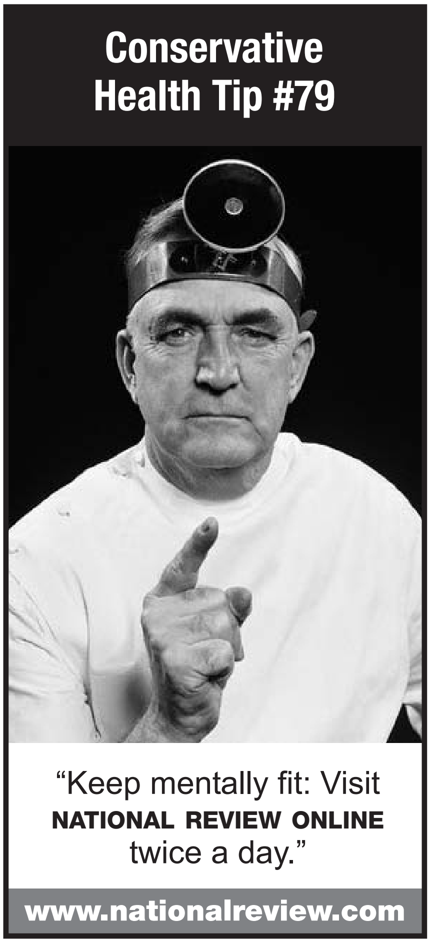
executive-branch officials that the surveillance was for the purpose of collecting foreign intelligence, and they would even be required to explain why the same information could not be garnered through "normal investigative techniques" such as grand-jury subpoenas. In short, they would now have to play by the same rules as beat cops.

This was simply not a practical impossibility. The ruling also fundamentally misunderstood the purpose of foreign-intelligence collection. Having probable cause means you already know someone is dangerous. But that's too late in the game: We did not have probable cause on Mohamed Atta the morning of 9/11. In gathering foreign intelligence, it is necessary to cast a wide net of suspicion in order to detect which regimes, organizations, and operatives might be a threat to Americans. Even without probable-cause restrictions, U.S. intelligence services managed to miss Pearl Harbor, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Iranian Revolution, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the emergence of India and Pakistan as nuclear powers, to say nothing of 9/11. How should we suppose they will perform under new burdens and restrictions?



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Somewhere in the world, tomorrow's Mohamed Atta is now presumptively shielded from the eyes and ears of American spies. And federal judges—rather than intelligence professionals—will make the final decision about whether his "rights" are to be infringed. J. Michael McConnell, the director of national intelligence, has said that the application of probable-cause standards to the gathering of foreign intelligence outside the United States will reduce our collection yield by two-thirds. (Those who would dismiss this opinion as partisan should recall that McConnell spent four years as NSA chief during the Clinton administration, and has more than a quarter-century's experience as an intelligence officer.)

After the FISA judge's ruling, Democrats were scared. They have fought to circumscribe the activities of our intelligence services for years, but the last thing they wanted was to be blamed for another terror attack. So when the Bush administration pushed last summer for passage of the Protect America Act—which clarifies that foreign-to-foreign communications remain outside FISA restrictions, effectively overturning the new ruling—they reluctantly went along.

But the Democrats agreed only to a six-month reprieve. They also promised to strip from the bill a section that protects from lawsuits those businesses that cooperated in good faith with U.S. intelligence operations—businesses that received written assurances from the government that their participation was legal. That is the principal sticking point: Democrats want telecoms on the hook for billions of dollars in damages for cooperating with the government. Meanwhile, leading Democrats—not only the House leadership but also key senators and the party's two presidential contenders—doggedly repeat two false claims: that the lapse of surveillance authority is of no significance, and that President Bush is merely playing up the issue for political advantage.

The bottom line is that the Democrats, by refusing to act, have effectively given every jihadist in every cave in Afghanistan the same protections that American citizens enjoy—and every American is less safe because of it. **NR**

■ BRITAIN

Sharia, Anglican-Style

The archbishop of Canterbury is a special kind of fool

ANTHONY DANIELS

At what point does otherworldliness become mere stupidity? At what point does woolly benevolence become vanity and spiritual pride? At what point does willful blindness become plain cowardice? At what point does intellectual incoherence become downright dishonesty?

These are but a few of the questions raised by the recent pronouncements of Rowan Williams, present archbishop of Canterbury and successor to St. Anselm. In a lecture to an audience of distinguished lawyers, including the lord chief justice of England, Williams appeared to say (and whatever Williams says, one must always add that he appears to say it, for he rarely makes his meaning sufficiently clear that it is beyond dispute) that elements of sharia law ought to share jurisdiction with British law. As he had just said over the BBC that it seemed "unavoidable" that sharia would become part of British law, his remarks caused a furor.

The words he used were as follows: "It might be possible to think in terms of . . . 'transformative accommodation': a scheme in which individuals retain the liberty to choose the jurisdiction under which they will seek to resolve certain carefully specified matters, so that [to quote the legal theorist Ayelet Shachar] 'power-holders are forced to compete for the loyalty of their shared constituents.'"

The archbishop was not just saying, or appeared not just to be saying, that people should be allowed to live according to their customs so long as their customs do not conflict with the law, an idea that is, after

Mr. Daniels is the author of *Utopias Elsewhere* and other books.

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all, the traditional basis of religious toleration. He is arguing that people should be free to choose the system of laws under which they live, though only on "certain carefully specified matters." It does not seem to have occurred to him that someone has to specify carefully the very matters on which people might be free to choose their jurisdiction: Of necessity, one jurisdiction has to be supreme.

Moreover, he appeared (though perhaps here I might safely say "was") completely ignorant of and unimaginative about the social reality of the people most affected by his argument, namely the Pakistani immigrants and their descendants who form the great majority of Muslims living in Britain. They come from areas of Pakistan and from a social class whose customs are among the most retrograde in the Muslim world, reinforced by the defensive conservatism of those who feel themselves culturally displaced. To give such people jurisdiction over family affairs is to condemn large numbers of women, brought up and educated in Britain, to lives of intolerable servitude, incomparably worse than those of women in the West before the advent of feminism. It should be for the Pakistani immigrant to undergo a transformative accommodation, as indeed many have done, and not for the rest of population to make an accommodating transformation.

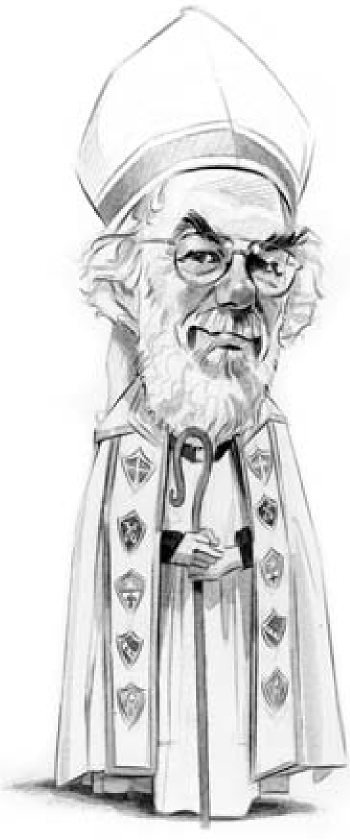
The archbishop omitted a cardinal fact from his address, because he was either not honest or not perceptive enough to notice it: namely, that in all the talk of transformative accommodation, it was not necessary to mention the Sikhs, the Hindus, the Buddhists, the Confucians, the Bahais, the Jains, and the Orthodox Christians, to say nothing of the Jews, of whom altogether there are many hundreds of thousands, if not millions, in Britain. This fact alone, if he were a man of the slightest understanding, should have given him pause.

In Williams's terminally woolly mind there is no such thing as an irreconcilable contradiction, let alone an actual conflict. The lion of polygamy will lie down with the lamb of monogamy, having reached first some kind of ecumenical compromise. "In such schemes . . . jurisdictional stakeholders may need to examine the way they operate; a communal/religious *nomos* [the socially constructed way of ordering experience] has to think through the risks of alienating its people by inflexible or over-restrictive applications of traditional law; and a universalist Enlightenment system has to weigh the possible consequences of ghettoizing and effectively disenfranchising a minority, at real cost to overall social cohesion and creativity."

What all this presumably boils down to is the necessity for creative compromise: the snowballing of adulterers, for example, or community service for apostates.

In most of the commentary in Britain that followed Williams's lecture to the lawyers, much allowance was given him for having been an academic theologian, accustomed to hedging all his statements with the subtle qualifications necessary to attain philosophical truth in a complex world such as ours. Tribute was paid to his erudition and the fact that he reads in eight languages. That one can only glimpse the archbishop's meaning—that is to say, his folly and moral cowardice—as through a glass darkly is attributed to the profundity and density of his thought.

This is far too generous an interpretation. In Williams, postmodernism meets Neville Chamberlain. His way of expressing himself is a symptom of the terrible degeneration of academic and intellectual life in Britain. In an interview with the editor of the *Guardian*, the liberal British newspaper, he was asked what he thought the public role of the archbishop of Canterbury should consist of. "Should or does," asked the archbishop? Should, replied the editor. Here is the answer from the successor to St. Anselm: "Should. Setting some kind of tonal vision [*sic*] for the church, the Church of England; pastoral involvement and collaboration with the other bishops. And the Church of England being the way it is, trying to—to find, crystallize some sort of—some sort of moral vision that's communicable to the nation at large. I think those—those are the essentials of it. And I think that—that brings with it the elements of the times being what I once called comic vicar to the nation."



Rowan Williams

DARREN GYGI

The editor, evidently astonished, said, "The what vicar?"

In the same interview, speaking of his role as a moral guide, the archbishop explained:

> What I mean I think is that why doesn't the archbishop condemn X, Y, Z? Because that's what archbishops do, you know, they condemn things, they—they make statements, usually negative or condemnatory statements. And I—I just wonder a bit whether, you know, when an archbishop condemns something suddenly in, I don't know, the bedsits of North London, [someone] may say, 'Oh, I shouldn't be having pre-marital sex,' or in the cells of al-Qaida, somebody says, 'Goodness, terrorism's wrong, the archbishop says so. I never thought of that.' I'm not sure that's, you know, that's how it is. But when I was in South Africa 20 years ago, I remember talking to somebody about—somebody who was very much involved in the struggle in South Africa, about what the church should or shouldn't be saying about violence, the struggle about apartheid, and he said, 'I'm not by any means saying the church should be condoning violence, I am saying that a lot of people have made—made their decisions before the church steps in, and you've got to be very careful about just making empty noises . . .' A lot of the time it's more that the church has to work with decisions people have made.

No wonder the archbishop said also that "leadership is—is, to me, a very, very murky and complicated concept." His inability to think clearly, as much because

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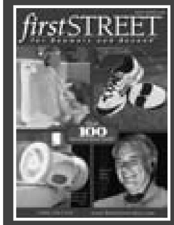

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of a character defect as because of an intellectual deficiency, is illustrated to perfection in his characterization, simultaneously inaccurate and mealy-mouthed, of the Salman Rushdie and Danish-cartoon crises in a lecture entitled "Religious Hatred and Religious Offence."

> For groups like those in West Yorkshire who were at the forefront of militant reaction in Britain, the overwhelming feeling that animated their protests was that they, as a disadvantaged minority with the most limited access to any sort of public voice, were being left at the mercy of a powerful elite determined to tell them what their faith really amounted to and to remind them that they had to get used to being seen—never mind the realities of their social and economic position here—as essentially the representatives of a foreign and threatening power. The same is true of the furor over the Danish cartoons: the Muslim community in Denmark is neither large nor militant, yet the cartoon issue was framed as if these products were a sign of courageous defiance towards a hegemonic power.

The ignorance, cowardice, and lack of imagination of the archbishop are here shown to be fathomless. Either ignorantly or dishonestly he disregards the reason why the cartoons were commissioned in the first place: namely to confront the fear of religious gangsterism that was already inhibiting free speech in Denmark; and he disregards the abundantly documented fact that the crisis was stirred up internationally by fanatical, unscrupulous, and mendacious clerics living in Denmark who traveled abroad to whip up anti-Danish hysteria in Muslim countries.

Therefore, when I heard people shouting at him to resign as he left a church in Cambridge, I could not help but think of my friend, an evangelical Christian, whose church sent her out to preach to the unconverted in the street soon after her own conversion.

"The Bible," she began, "tells us that there are three kinds of fool."

"Yes," shouted one of her audience, "and you're one of them."

This brought her preaching career (though not her faith) to a complete and final end. If only someone had shouted something as effective at the Right Reverend Dr. Rowan Williams early in his career. **NR**

■ THE MIDEAST

Dead to Rights

The world is better off without Imad Mughniyah

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

LATE at night on February 12, a car exploded in Kfar Sousse, a quiet residential district of Damascus, and killed the lone man who was about to drive away in it. Some say that a bomb was detonated by remote control; others say that the device had been placed in the driver's headrest. There seem to have been no witnesses, and nobody else was hurt. So Imad Mughniyah died, or as an associate, the Iraqi Shiite militia leader Moqtada al-Sadr, put it, "He was sent to paradise where he became a martyr of world Islamic resistance." Mughniyah may not be a household name in the West, but he deserves to be. A master terrorist of the times, thoroughly professional, he hid away without the element of playboy publicity common to the better-known Osama bin Laden and Carlos the Jackal. To catch him in the shadows of Kfar Sousse as he left a party given by an Iranian official was an exceptional feat. The consequences are quite unpredictable.

Devoted to violence, conspiracy, and secrecy, Mughniyah's life illustrates the failure of the Arab and Muslim political and social order. In the absence of the rule of law and institutions to enforce it, the strong and the rich are free to act as they dare, thriving at the expense of everyone else and maintaining themselves in power by sponsoring individuals of bad character to do their bidding. In the course of lawless careers, ambitious but flawed individuals like Mughniyah acquire the means to challenge for power in their own right. So the cycles of violence are self-perpetuating, time and again degrading society as a whole.

Mughniyah's biographical details are hard to come by. Born in 1962, he was the son of a vegetable seller and grew up as a Shiite Muslim in the village of Tayr Dibba in southern Lebanon. Seemingly in 1976, more boy than man, he joined Force 17, the elite personal bodyguard of Yasser Arafat, and this has given rise to unfounded rumors that he was actually a Palestinian and a Sunni. A sniper in Beirut during the Lebanese civil war, he targeted Christians. When the PLO was forced to evacuate that city in 1982, he stayed behind and switched allegiance to Hezbollah, the Shiite militia that Iran was then recruiting and financing in Lebanon as an essential part of its imperialist expansion.

Hezbollah gave Mughniyah the chance to do his worst, attacking the U.S. embassy in Beirut (63 dead), the barracks of French troops (58 dead), and the barracks of American Marines (241 dead); kidnapping and sometimes killing hostages; bombing the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires and a Jewish cultural center there (29 dead and 85 dead respectively); and so on. Effectively the chief of staff of Hezbollah, he was responsible for its intelligence and security apparatus as well as its fighting capacity, as demonstrated in Hezbollah's 2006 campaign against Israel. Here was a central operative in the alliance of Iran and Syria that is determining peace and war in the region.

Solid evidence exists that he was in touch with al-Qaeda in general, and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Iraq in particular. American and Israeli intelligence agencies pay tribute to his organizational skills. The FBI had him high on the Most Wanted list of terrorists, with a bounty of $5 million on his head. "The world is a better place without this man in it," said the State Department spokesman, evidently much gratified. Danny Yatom, the Mossad chief in the 1990s and now a member of the Knesset, says: "Mughniyah was one of the most dangerous terrorists ever. He operated in complete secrecy and concealed his every action. . . . [He] operated with full cooperation with Iranian intelligence. He was a very clever man." Mughniyah is known to have traveled on unscheduled flights and false papers put at his disposal by Iran, and to have had face-lifts for good measure. Recently living clandestinely in Damascus, he was reported to have been in touch with Khaled Mashaal, the head of Hamas, the Palestinian Islamist terror

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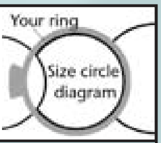

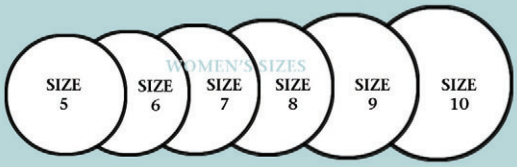

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group, to coordinate an attack on Israel on two fronts.

So who killed him? An initial suspicion, of course, was that Mughniyah might have staged his own death. This being the Middle East, there are several possible lines of inquiry. A hallmark of Syrian intelligence is blowing up cars without being detected. Some Palestinian suspects have already been arrested in Damascus. Perhaps Mughniyah knew too much about the crimes of the Syrian elite for his own good. Or perhaps he had crossed or double-crossed his Iranian masters. Various Lebanese factions, Christian and Muslim, have reason to want a Hezbollah leader of his capability out of the way.

Speculation, indeed the truth, is academic, however. Israel certainly has a policy of "targeted assassination." In the early years of Hezbollah in Lebanon, an Israeli air strike took out its leader, Sheikh Abbas Mussawi, and other air strikes have killed Hamas leaders in Gaza. What matters is that the Arab and Muslim street is certain that Israel has done it again, and that Israeli denials are only pro forma. At Mughniyah's funeral, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, the head of Hezbollah, told mourners what they hoped to hear and in any case were determined to believe: "Zionists, if you want this sort of open war, then let the whole world hear, so be it!" He continued, "The blood of Imad Mughniyah will make them [Israel] withdraw from existence."

The outcome of Iran's nuclear program will determine the future of the Middle East and the course of Islamist terror as well. A secondary player, Syria allows itself to be dragged along in Iran's wake, displaying in its search for power over others all the characteristics that shape the failure of the Arab political and social order. For almost 40 years, the country has been under the absolute rule of the Assad family, first Hafez and for the last seven years his son Bashar. The Assads have maintained a centralized economy based on the old Soviet model, and they have further impoverished the country by siphoning off billion-dollar fortunes for themselves and their cronies. Bad characters, they invite other bad characters to help with the dirty work. The security and police apparatus does whatever is required to extend the regime's criminality by suppressing anyone and everyone asking for change. Some of those in prison are Islamists, some are Kurdish nationalists, and some are democrats, for instance Dr. Kamal Labwani, Riad Seif, and Anwar al-Bunni, who also ought to be household names in the free world.

Syria is too fragile and vulnerable a state to undertake military adventures as Iran does. Willing to wound and yet afraid to strike—to borrow from Alexander Pope—Syria sponsors others to do so on its behalf. About a dozen terror groups have headquarters in Damascus, mobilized variously for Syrian purposes. Some, like Hamas, are there to be exploited against Israel; others, like al-Qaeda, are there to recruit jihadists and suicide bombers to be dispatched to Iraq; yet others, like Hezbollah, are expected to consolidate the Syrian hold over Lebanon. In conjunction with Hezbollah, Syrian agents in 2005 murdered by means of a car bomb Rafik Hariri, the former Lebanese prime minister, and later similarly killed one after another a number of parliamentarians and dissidents opposed to Syria. A United Nations special tribunal is investigating the ultimate responsibility of Bashar Assad and his family in these murders. Lebanon at the moment is without a president, because Hezbollah has managed to postpone no fewer than 14 times the parliamentary sessions to elect the new head of state. Iran and Syria are insisting on arrangements that will allow them to control decisions and policy, in effect re-colonizing the country. That may involve unleashing Hezbollah in a civil war in Lebanon, or in another campaign against Israel.

At the G-8 summit at St. Petersburg in 2006, President Bush was overheard on a microphone confiding to Tony Blair, "What they need to do is get Syria to get Hezbollah to stop doing this s**t and it's over." The analysis and the idiom were right, but the conclusion drawn was inadequate: He wanted Kofi Annan of the U.N. to phone Bashar and "make something happen." Less wishfully, sanctions have been put in place, and President Bush announced some tightening of them within a day of Mughniyah's death—which the Arab press tends to conclude is no coincidence. At the same time, secretary of state Condoleezza Rice has gone out of the way to meet her Syrian counterparts, and she is far from alone in Washington in proposing appeasement. Syria was invited to the Annapolis conference last year. Blowing hot and cold simultaneously only encourages the premise on which Syrian policies rest, that the worse the behavior the greater the rewards.

Six months ago, something was made to happen—in accordance with President Bush's phrasing—that was mysterious even by the standards of the region. Israeli aircraft took out an installation in the Syrian countryside, and then the Israeli government refrained from explanations and statements. Some have suggested that the installation must have had to do with nuclear weaponry. The Syrians were equally silent, and furthermore took no action, presumably because they were weighing the costs they had been obliged to pay for their behavior. The death of Mughniyah adds to those costs. **NR**

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‘Re-Liberators’

A progress report from Iraq

RICHARD LOWRY

Hamada, Iraq

THIS small, rural village in Diyala Province north of Baghdad experienced a revolution a month ago. Hamada had been controlled by al-Qaeda and its band of teenage killers, who terrorized the place. Qaeda imams took over the mosques and people stopped going. The mayor of the nearby city of Muqdadiya lived here—until al-Qaeda blew up his house and he fled. The village became a ghost town.

Then, for the first time in five years of war, U.S. troops showed up. They captured key Qaeda leaders, and the rest ran away. Local citizens formed a makeshift security force, and people returned to the streets. Suddenly it was a new day.

Hassen Nssaif Jasim, a retired lieutenant colonel in the Iraqi army who leads the local security volunteers, hosts us, his American visitors, in his dirt front yard. He looks rugged in a brown knit cap, with a mustache and a day’s worth of stubble on his face. His handful of security volunteers stand by along the road, holding rifles, with a strap of reflective material thrown over their shoulders to denote their quasi-official status. “I told everyone this is a golden opportunity,” he says of his message to fellow villagers. “Don’t lose it.”

Isolated towns like this one, with a population of 750 and a dirt road off a small canal as the main thoroughfare, are highly vulnerable to al-Qaeda. “It’s easy to intimidate them,” explains an American officer. “They get up in the morning and there are a bunch of heads in the soccer field.” At the village level, the War on Terror is less a grand ideological struggle than an elemental fight to replace men with guns who want to prey on the local population (al-Qaeda) with men with guns who want to help it (us). No romanticism about human nature is required to see that most people will prefer the latter.

Gen. Mark Hertling, who commands American forces in the north of Iraq, recalls being introduced in the nearby village of Himbus to a twelve-year-old girl who had pointed out where the Qaeda thugs were hiding. “I asked her why she had done that,” General Hertling explains, “and she said, ‘They were riding up and down the roads on mopeds shooting in the air. They killed my two brothers, my father couldn’t farm, and I couldn’t go to school.’ ”

It would still be that way without U.S. forces. Iraq is a mind-bogglingly complex country that defies generalizations, except this one: Where U.S. troops have a substantial presence, there is more security, more grassroots political activity, and more economic progress. Hence the success of the surge, and the imperative not to draw down from it too quickly. Before he lets his American visitors leave, Hassen Nssaif Jasim insists—fixing us with a glare and twice asking if he can rely on us—that we take home a message: “We are very serious, and we are going to go all the way to the end of the path. We don’t want you to leave.”

A year after the surge, this is not an uncommon sentiment. South of Baghdad, Sheik Mahir Hawr Ragab tells us, “You can’t compare working with the U.S. with [working with] the government of Iraq.” Asked what will happen if the Americans pull out, he says, “I’m the first one—I take my passport and leave.”

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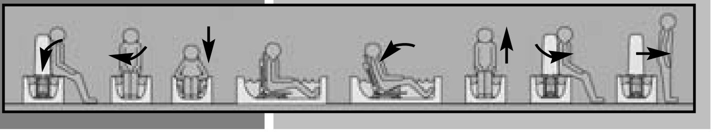

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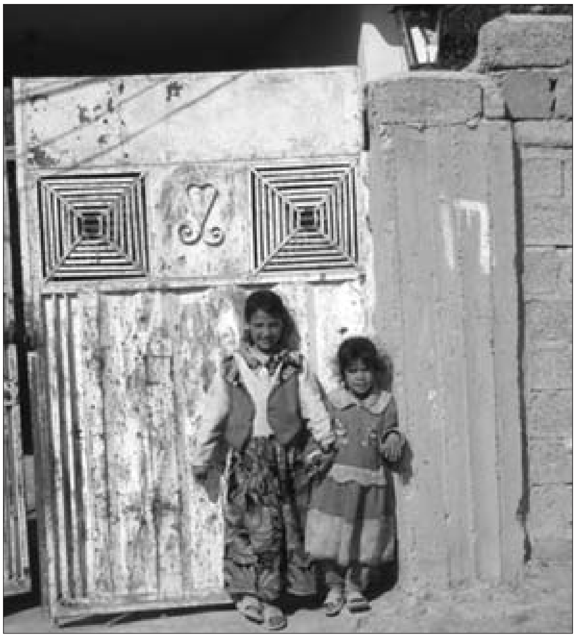
‘WE’RE GOING TO GET IRAQRACY’

A top U.S. general puts it aptly when he says, “In some ways, our soldiers have come to be seen as re-liberators.” In 2006, we watched Iraq descend into a sectarian hell that killed thousands and chased millions from the country. We stayed in our large bases and stuck by our plan of handing over control to Iraqi security forces, even though they manifestly weren’t ready for it.

Iraq’s year of torment, and our year of shame, began to change with the surge. Chronically undermanned, we added more than 30,000 troops to our contingent of 140,000. As important as the increased numbers was what we did with them. American troops got out into the neighborhoods, establishing joint security stations and combat outposts. Americans now live among the population. “We don’t commute to work,” says Gen. Rick Lynch of the Third Infantry Division in Baghdad.



A new day in Hamada

ALL PHOTOS BY RICHARD LOWRY

Almost every indicator of violence is headed in the right direction. Last year’s indispensable abbreviation, EJK, or extra-judicial killings—meaning sectarian murders—is barely heard now. The sectarian civil war has dissipated in Baghdad. Nationwide, enemy actions are down about 60 percent since June. In December, American casualties were at early-2004 levels.

More than 60 percent of improvised explosive devices (IEDs)—the enemy’s most deadly weapon—are now found and cleared, a direct result of more tips from the civilian population. And the effectiveness of IEDs that aren’t found has declined. The bomb-making networks have been disrupted, and the top tier of personnel have been killed or captured. “We’re now on the second and third string,” says a U.S. general.

Gen. David Petraeus has emphasized the distinction between reconcilable and irreconcilable enemies. The former can be won over with various forms of persuasion; the latter must be captured or killed. This principle is dramatically illustrated by the security volunteers around the country known as “concerned local citizens” (CLCs), or, more recently, “sons of Iraq.” There are now about 80,000 of them, 75 percent Sunni.

They represent more or less a direct transfer of forces from the enemy’s side to ours. General Lynch estimates that about 60 percent of them had insurgent tendencies. U.S. officers tell stories of men who were targeted by U.S. forces but turned around to lead or join CLC units. Lynch marvels at the change of heart of a former Sunni fighter his troops had been hunting: “Yesterday, he and I were man-kissing.”

There are about 30,000 CLCs in Baghdad, and they have been key to securing the city. The CLCs have “thickened” U.S. forces on the ground and helped the U.S. get to roughly the force-to-population ratio recommended in the counterinsurgency manual. They provide crucial intelligence—in one town, they even went out in the morning and put out orange traffic cones to warn where the IEDs had been placed. “They have been absolutely decisive,” says Lynch.

Al-Qaeda is on the defensive. It has been basically run out of Anbar Province in the west, and also, increasingly, out of Baghdad, where it has trouble mounting spectacular vehicle bombings and instead must resort to bombers in suicide vests. The fight has been migrating to the north, which now sees 53 percent of all attacks in the country.

American commanders compare what they have done to al-Qaeda to squeezing toothpaste. Every time al-Qaeda is squeezed out of one area, it goes into another, but with fewer and worse-organized fighters. It is making a stand in the city of Mosul in Ninewa Province, where a battle looms. But a historic victory over al-Qaeda in the Arab heartland is now entirely conceivable.

Another ingredient in the improved security situation is the ongoing ceasefire declared last year by Moqtada al-Sadr and his Jaish al-Mahdi (JAM) militia. It isn’t being honored by the splinter JAM “special groups.” They are armed and trained by the Qods Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, and are proficient killers of American troops. An increasingly dangerous threat, they are a means for Iran to prevent the emergence of a stable, democratizing neighbor.

For all the security gains over the last year, American commanders believe they have hit a plateau. “Security is such that it’s not going to get much better than it is. This isn’t going to be a utopian society,” says Lynch. As another general puts it, “The low-hanging fruit is gone.” Further reductions depend on improvements in services and jobs.

U.S. commanders aim to “fill the gap” between the people and the government; it’s in that gap—where the government is not providing security, services, or jobs—that insurgents thrive. We have been filling it as best we can, but ultimately the Iraqi government has to do it. Here, we have been constantly prodding and encouraging, and there is at least marginal movement. Ultimately, we’ll have to be realistic about Iraqi politics. As the head of an American provincial reconstruction team says, “We’re not going to get democracy, we’re going to get Iraqracy. If it *works*—that’s a good system.”

‘WHAT RIGHT LOOKS LIKE’

A Sunni neighborhood in the Dora section of Baghdad, off Airplane Road, is a showcase for our counterinsurgency successes. Once, for Americans to come here was a “deliberate combat operation,” in the words of Col. Ricky Gibbs. Then, in late September, the neighborhood turned. Now, it is "what right looks like."

When on a crisp, cool Saturday evening American soldiers show up on 35th Street—once dubbed "Ambush Alley"—they are mobbed by clamoring children as soon as they leave their vehicles. Stores are open on a street that was deserted just months ago. The median strip, once regularly implanted with improvised explosives, is spruced up with fresh brickwork. An American captain—"the mayor" of the neighborhood—is greeted by name by an Iraqi boy who runs up to shake his hand. He is petitioned by two women—one of whom says her husband was killed by al-Qaeda—who want to be hired by the Iraqi government as teachers.

"Once we sent a signal to the people that we weren't leaving, they came out in droves to help us out; once we sent a signal to al-Qaeda, they left in droves because they couldn't stand and fight," says Colonel Gibbs. The Americans put their faith in "mass and time," believing that a substantial combat presence, applied over time, would make the difference. Seventy troops are devoted to the neighborhood, a relatively high number that we don't have the forces to duplicate everywhere.

Now, American troops live among the people throughout Dora. "How did we get there?" Gibbs asks. "We moved to the sound of the guns." It took months of costly urban warfare—89 Americans were killed—for his troops to rout al-Qaeda and establish outposts in the city.

What makes the Airplane Road neighborhood so special is not the reduction in violence, which is typical in Baghdad, but the restoration of some services through a makeshift arrangement between U.S. troops and a local doctor-turned-contractor. "It's been all U.S. dollars," Gibbs says of the effort. He has used dollars available from the Commanders' Emergency Response Program (CERP), a bureaucracy-free source of funds that American commanders say is as good as ammunition. "I can't spend it fast enough," Gibbs says, expressing a sentiment that is nearly universal among U.S. officers.

The local contractor is Dr. Moayad. Through him, the Americans have fixed the streets, picked up the trash, built a

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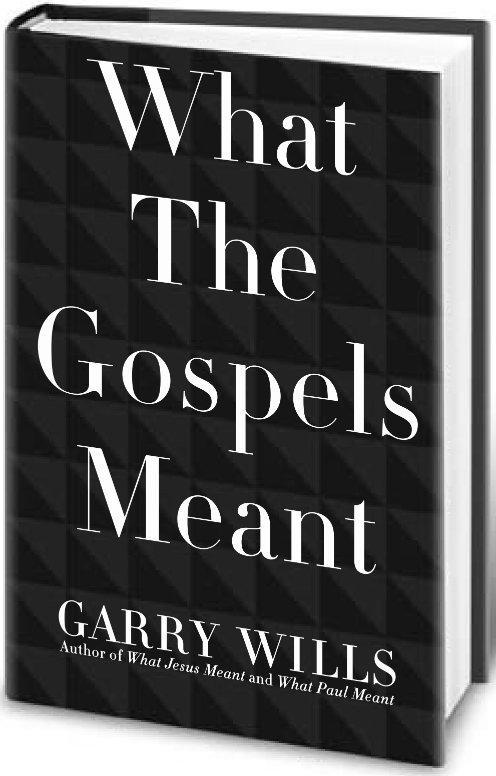

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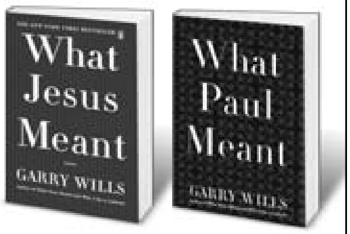

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VIKING

new electricity generator, and painted with bright murals the concrete barriers protecting the neighborhood. Moayad is creating a strip of park along the barriers—ubiquitous in Baghdad—with a path, benches, and newly planted shrubbery. Each of his projects means jobs in the neighborhood, which are priceless. Colonel Gibbs looks at the nascent park, where once bodies were dumped, and sees jobs in each component of it: the pathway—"bricklayers"; the greenery—"gardeners"; the latticework fencing—"iron-workers."

Dr. Moayad is a kindly, stout man with a brush of dark hair whom American officers describe as a "hero." Over tea and sweets in his middle-class home (his mother has made a delicious Black Forest cake for his American visitors), the doctor talks about the changes in the neighborhood since the surge. "Now if there's any problem, people go straight to the Humvee," he says. The doctor sounds like the top U.S. general when he comments, "This is the second time you have liberated this country."

U.S. troops in Baghdad—and a few of their admirers

It should be the Shiite-dominated Iraqi central government contracting with people like Moayad. But it can't, or won't. A gap still yawns between the government and Sunnis in neighborhoods like these, even with the U.S. striving to close it. Colonel Gibbs needs the interior ministry to hire policemen, the health ministry to open clinics, and the education ministry to hire teachers—and all three are frustratingly slow.

"There's no government. We're living under U.S. forces. Now we're afraid U.S. forces will leave, and then who will take care of the neighborhood?" asks Dr. Moayad. He recalls that when Ahmed Chalabi—the famous Iraqi exile who now coordinates services for the government—visited the neighborhood, people asked, "Why is this man coming here?" Moayad explains: "General Petraeus they accept, but not this Iraqi official." Moayad's brother has been detained by government security services without charge for months, in a kind of de facto kidnapping Americans have worked to have reversed. "We've had an American awakening and a Sunni awakening," Moayad says, referring to the surge and the Sunni turn away from the insurgency. "Now, we need a government awakening."

'ON THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN'

The Sunni awakening began, of course, in the western province of Anbar. Now it's almost hard to remember that the province was once the molten core of the insurgency. The rapid improvement in security conditions has surprised even the commanders on the ground. (A general elsewhere in Iraq reports that one of his colleagues in Anbar marvels at the rapidity of the change, and quotes him as saying, "I don't know what happened out here.") The initial tribal revolt against al-Qaeda began a virtuous circle that is still playing out; the number of security incidents has declined for 13 months straight.

This tribal awakening provided a rallying point for people who opposed al-Qaeda, which in turn has splintered and been forced to the hinterlands. "AQI [al-Qaeda in Iraq] is now on the outside looking in," says a military briefer. Without access to the population, and no longer able to claim to be protecting it, al-Qaeda is exposed as merely a bunch of thugs.

The terror group used to have a hierarchical structure capable of moving resources in response to quite specific needs, but that structure has been smashed. Fighters stay off their cellphones now and rely on messengers. Because the Iraqi forces are better able to identify foreigners in their neighborhoods, the traditional routes for foreign fighters are drying up. Security incidents are down to seven per day on a 90-day rolling average. The American military thinks it can get that number down to perhaps five, but not lower until Iraqi security forces further improve.

The tribes came to our side thanks to serendipity, skillful diplomacy, the brutality of al-Qaeda—and our staying power. We were worth accommodating to only when we made it clear we weren't going to be chased from Iraq. An American general elsewhere in Iraq remembers a sheik's asking him right after the invasion, "Are you going to stay?" The sheik then explained to him, "You survive an occupation by being on the winning side." (The general recalls, "I said, 'You're not being occupied.' He said, 'You're here, aren't you?'")

We promised the sheiks that if they switched sides we'd bring peace and reconstruction. That's on the mind of Sheik Hamid Ahmed al-Hashim al-Alwani and the assembled Sunni businessmen at the Fallujah Business Center, once an abandoned building. Ample, in a red-and-white checkered headdress, the sheik gives his American visitors a flowery welcome that includes several references to Fallujah as "the city of peace." After the long preliminaries, he says, "And now a question: Doesn't that city deserve someone to extend a hand to help that city?"

Shops have returned to Fallujah. Traffic waits to get into the city at a security checkpoint (everyone must have an ID card and undergo a quick biometric scan). Fallujah has new solar-powered street lamps. A hospital is being built with Iraqi funds. But there is a need for more. Though the central government budgeted tens of millions of dollars for the province in 2007, the U.S. has no idea whether any of it was actually spent. There is a "glass ceiling" on development, American officers say, as long as the province struggles with power, fuel, and transportation shortages.

Meanwhile, al-Qaeda is decamping northward. The swath of Iraq north of Baghdad has long been an "economy of force" operation for the U.S.—in other words, undermanned. As the biggest city, Mosul, sank into chaos in 2005, the American force wasn't increased. At the beginning of the surge, it even lost troops to the fight to secure Baghdad. One battalion—600 troops—had responsibility for a city of nearly 2 million. Now, Mosul sees twice the number of IEDs as Baghdad, though it is a third the size. Al-Qaeda in Iraq feels as though it can't afford to be seen to lose Mosul, where we have been sending forces in preparation for a major battle.

The north of Iraq is extremely complex, with the Kurdish–Arab competition for land and influence layered atop a varied ethnic landscape that includes Turkmen, Christians, and Yazidis. It has a more fractious tribal structure than Anbar. But Mosul lacks the sectarian strife of Baghdad: Tamping down a civil war is not part of the fight. Instead, the objective is to defeat Qaeda fighters trying to hide among the Sunni population.

"Eventually we will establish security," says an American officer, "but that's half the fight. The rest is follow-through, addressing the grievances of the local population." That means, foremost, absorbing unemployed males into the economy. Everywhere, jobs for young men are a special concern—because al-Qaeda can pay them $200 for every IED they plant, and because they have been socialized over the last five years to terrible violence. "The number-one employment issue," says the American officer, "is getting money from the central government circulating here."

'THE SIXTH SEASON OF *THE SOPRANOS*'

Which is the mantra across the country. Even shoving money out the door to the provinces has been beyond the capacities of the central government (assuming it has wanted to do it in the first place—which is in doubt when it comes to the Sunni areas). It is not unusual to hear people say flat out that there isn't a government of Iraq.

Prime Minister Maliki has an extraordinarily weak hand. His Dawa party has no popular base; Ayatollah Sistani basically gave it two dozen seats in the legislature during negotiations over the unified Shiite list in the 2005 parliamentary elections. On top of that, Maliki's bloc is split, and he needs 138 votes to pass anything. He is widely considered a failure and there have been numerous attempts to topple him. "Maliki has realized he has survived, but that hasn't made him harder," says a top American general.

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Then there is the simple question of ability. "None of these people have done any strategic leadership," says the general. Maliki has no one with any technical expertise in his inner circle, a debilitating weakness when trying to manage a dysfunctional, overly bureaucratic government in an environment of endemic corruption. Even a Maliki adviser concedes, "The Shia for decades were out of power. They don't know how to run a government. Maliki just ran a newspaper in Syria." Then he adds, "Sometimes in a cabinet meeting I just want to cover my eyes." According to a U.S. official, when the Americans suggested to Maliki that he implement a $1 billion employment program, he said, "Great, I'm all for it—how do we do it?"

Maliki has a narrow-minded and paranoid worldview, and is perpetually fearful of a Sunni resurgence. He doesn't have good relations with any Sunnis. This has played into the government's foot-dragging on reaching out to the Sunnis and incorporating the Sunni CLCs into the police. "I understand misgivings, but it's a year and a half later—Sunnis aren't going to take over the country," says an American intelligence expert.

Trust is in short supply all around. "It is a zero-sum game for these guys because they don't know what tomorrow is," an American officer says of Iraqi officials. Everybody is jockeying for position, and wants to keep his armor-protected cars and his guys to serve tea at meetings and the spots in the Green Zone for his two wives. "This whole place is a struggle for power and influence—that's what it's all about," says an American general. "Watch the sixth season of *The Sopranos*."

Sheik Hamid Ahmed al-Hashim al-Alwani, in Fallujah

Maliki is hardly the worst of the Shiite politicians. Consider Bayan Jabr. When he was minister of the interior, he presided over some of the worst abuses of the civil war; tortured prisoners were found in his ministry office. He was forced from the ministry of interior, but now heads the ministry of finance. Jabr is from the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (SIIC), the most powerful Shiite party. It is run by the Hakim family, is close to Iran, and holds a dominant position in the south, which it wants to split off into a separate region.

In addition, Sadrists are honeycombed throughout the government. All of this makes treacherous going for non-sectarian actors who want to do the best for the nation. As soon it became widely known that he was hiring Sunnis and Shiites at a 50–50 ratio, the head of the national police got signals that he might not be the right man for the job. Army or police generals who do their job well and in a non-sectarian way can get transferred—or worse. General Qais, the director of police for Babil Province in the south, was a hero to American troops who worked with him—talented, evenhanded, and a dedicated enemy of militias. Baghdad tried to transfer him. When Americans successfully resisted, the problem was dealt with more directly—he was killed by an explosively formed penetrator, or what locals call an "Iranian IED."

'AN IRANIAN CITY'

But the most intense arena of intra-Shiite competition is the oil-rich southern port city of Basra. There, the British have executed a kind of anti-surge. They cut a deal with Sadr, who gave them a ceasefire in exchange for stopping their patrols and vacating their base in a city palace. The deal has held—sort of. The British are subjected to fewer rocket attacks than before, but they are still rocketed at their airbase—probably by JAM's "special groups"—and the deal has come at the price of sacrificing nearly all influence in Basra.

One American general compares Basra to an Italian city-state. The Fadila party, which splintered from the Sadrists, controls the governorship and the oil; the Sadrists control the ports; SIIC has the rest of the south and wants Basra—the oil-rich gem—as well. Corruption is rife and every party has its private army, making for a toxic stew.

The British deal has delivered Basra to Iranian influence. Iran funds the political parties, and the businesses. One intelligence expert says, "For all intents and purposes, it's an Iranian city." Iran has myriad interests in play. In southern Iraq, it wants a proxy province that will be easy to control. In general, it wants to keep Iraq chaotic, so that a Westernizing, nascent democracy does not solidify on its border. Its ideal would be to create a Lebanese-style Hezbollah party, and for this a charismatic leader is needed. But Iran hasn't found him yet.

Moqtada al-Sadr is in Iran, where he is believed to be having a breakdown, trying to reconsolidate his organization, or both. There is a split in his movement over, among other things, whether to accept the political process or continue armed resistance. After a popular reaction against him following an armed confrontation in Karbala last year, Sadr declared his nationwide ceasefire. But JAM has now split into a faction that has abided by the ceasefire, various criminal elements, and the deadly "special groups."

It is in our interests to check the Iranians and keep the region from living under the boot of one of the Shiite religious parties. But the need to exert American influence in the south without sending large numbers of troops there—an impossibility—will remain a nettlesome diplomatic and political problem going forward. As for the British, they have all but checked out.

At their airbase outside the city, British officials tell our visiting delegation that they want to convince us they haven't "lost." The unpersuasive presentation ends fittingly—with a siren. Everyone falls to the floor in the small conference room until a rocket attack is over. The British have chosen to take the attacks and not hit back, a humiliating expedient. After a handful of explosions, we all get up and the British general opens the door to see his staff and his next group of visitors all still prone on the ground. "Our next meeting," he comments wryly.

'GETTING ON WITH IT'

For all the treachery and disappointments of Iraqi politics, several large factors are encouraging.

Legislation is finally moving in the parliament. "There is a degree of dynamism in the Council of Representatives that hasn't been seen in the past," says the top American general. "They realize that they have to get on with it. They're stuck with each other." The council had been debating whether or not to meet; now it has been debating—and occasionally passing—substantial legislation. It has passed an imperfect de-Baathification law (whose effect depends on its implementation), as well as a new budget, an amnesty law, and a provincial-powers act.

Iraqi security forces continue to grow. A year ago, there were worries that the Iraqi army would be wholly taken over by sectarian Shiite actors. That threat seems to have passed, and the army expands apace, as does the police force. The army will add another 40 battalions this year alone. As the military steadily gets bigger and more proficient—a part of the rumbling, uneven progress in Iraq that General Petraeus calls the "Mesopotamian stampede"—it gives the Iraqi state a firmer foundation and the Iraqi government more confidence.

Then there is the grassroots ferment represented by the turn of the Sunni sheiks toward the U.S. and the rise of CLCs. In western Iraq and in Baghdad, they represent a potentially more practical Sunni leadership, one that is willing to accept the new political dispensation and take a deal. Similar if less developed stirrings are heard in the south. There they are a reaction against the Shiite religious parties and the influence of Iran, and the government is trying to squash them exactly because they represent a political threat. It is crucial to begin to capture this grassroots energy and give it formal political expression through provincial elections this year (which, according to the provincial-powers law, must be held by October 1).

Everyone agrees that the rules under which the 2005 elections were held, the "closed list" that allowed people to vote only for party slates, were a mistake. No one knew whom he was voting for, and there is no district-by-district representa-

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tion to give Iraqis a specific legislator to hold accountable. The system empowered the out-of-touch Shiite religious parties that rule Iraq today. Americans hope to move to an "open list," but the Shiite parties will resist it. Fortunately, the U.S. has an ally in the U.N. special envoy to Iraq, Staffan de Mistura, an elegant diplomat who knows Iraq and is committed to leveraging the legitimacy of the U.N. in shrewd and useful ways.

All over Iraq, you hear two sentiments. One is exhaustion with the violence. The other is the sense that the government has failed. You hear it everywhere. In the north and the west and the south and in between. From elected officials, from Iraqi generals, from sheiks, from Sunnis and Shiites. It is a universal belief, uniting all sects, across all of Iraq's divides. The Shiite governor of Karbala in the south says, "People want elections because they want—as they say in the U.S.—change." (Then he jokingly pumps his fist in the air and says, "Obama! Obama!")

This popular feeling is the most hopeful feature of the Iraqi political landscape, holding out the prospect of a bottom-up change that will eventually transform national politics.

'ONLY AMERICA'

In the meantime, the U.S. military fills the gap. It is more popular than al-Qaeda (obviously), Iran, and the Iraqi government. Locally, there isn't much in the way of anti-occupation sentiment; to the extent it exists, it's higher up in the government, among sectarian Iraqi officials. "The ones that want us out have an agenda they haven't finished," says an American officer.

Iraqi troops with their new M-16s

Everything depends on the U.S. military. First and foremost, security, and then the political and economic activity that flow from it. It's the military setting up local governments, and the military pump-priming the local economies with down-and-dirty aid dollars and micro-loans. A lot of this is in the job description of the State Department, but Secretary Rice hasn't displayed a keen interest in Iraq and clearly wants her legacy to be elsewhere. So inertia and bureaucracy rule. State can't move money with anything like the rapidity the military does with CERP. A frustrated State Department official with a provincial reconstruction team says, "We have to get permission [from the embassy] for anything above $25,000 and it takes eight months. It's a joke."

It's just a fact of life that our troops are our greatest instrument of leverage in Iraq. Already, drawing down from the surge means a drastic 25 percent reduction in U.S. combat power in six months. U.S. commanders think they can avoid backsliding by thinning out their forces on the ground rather than pulling them out of areas entirely. But we are operating within a small margin of error. Fortunately, defense secretary Robert Gates has now come out in favor of a "pause" when we hit the pre-surge level of 15 brigades in the summer, ensuring there won't be a hasty and willy-nilly withdrawal that throws away our gains.

Staying at the 15-brigade level will be a further strain on the military. Nearly every soldier or marine you meet here seems to be on his third tour. They take incredible risks every day, and too many have paid with their lives or have suffered horrific injuries. Their devotion is inspiring. And it is matched by their ingenuity and wit. Officers here all emphasize that there's no real training for the complexities—military, political, economic, and diplomatic—that they face every hour. Yet they all have learned, bringing a can-do pragmatism to every task—and they have performed brilliantly.

In one sense, what the military is spearheading is a crash course in Westernization across Iraq. Everyone is realistic about how much of it will take hold, but you have to be touched by those brave Iraqis committed to building something new. Every Iraqi military or police general that the U.S. military considers impressive is under threat, and not just from open enemies of the Iraqi state. In meetings with Americans, these generals sit side by side with militia-influenced mayors or governors who have an interest in seeing them dead.

It's hard to imagine abandoning them, or the likes of Col. Abbas Fadhil, who heads the Besmaya training facility for the Iraqi army. He is a bluff, irrepressible man who talks like an open fire hydrant. "Iraqis need your help," he tells us. "For 35 years, Saddam treated Iraqis like slaves. No other country in the world kicked out Saddam, only America. If I wanted to talk three hours, it's not long enough about America." And it's not empty verbiage—like so many Iraqis, he has paid a dear price for standing up. He was the spokesman for the recruiting drive for the Iraqi army in 2003–04, and JAM attacked his house, killing his infant daughter.

Listening to him and seeing his Iraqi troops proudly receive new M-16s, it's possible to envision Iraq's emerging as a stable ally of the United States. It would be a historic achievement, although that prospect is still far off, and reaching it isn't entirely within our own power.

"This hand is the peace hand and we are waiting for the answer," Sheik Khaled—a slender, self-possessed Sunni with a neatly trimmed beard—says from his large compound in Baghdad. "The Iraqi government doesn't even exist. It's all between us and the Americans." After a year, that's the story of the surge's success. If we are going to prevail in the long term, though, it eventually has to be between him and the Iraqi government. **NR**

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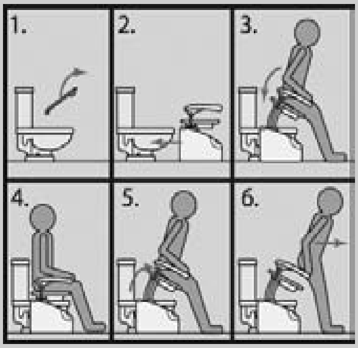

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THE WORLD

Troubled In Spirit

The surprising direction of African Christianity

TRAVIS KAVULLA

Nairobi, Kenya

A WOMAN like Margaret Wanjiru, the self-anointed bishop of one of Kenya's largest churches, could not have existed even a generation ago in Africa. That she does now owes largely to the worldwide evangelical reawakening that first got its legs in the United States.

Like American megachurches, Wanjiru's Jesus Is Alive Ministries has a formidable flagship establishment: a converted warehouse in central Nairobi that comfortably seats 5,000 people, though thousands more regularly pack into her services. These services rely on free-style prayer, catchy hymns, and sermonizing to keyboard synchronization—all tropes of American evangelical worship. Bishop Wanjiru, like many an American evangelist, also has interests outside the walls of her physical church. She owns a Bible school and a bus line, and appears in a primetime slot on one of Kenya's four television channels. After a visiting Oklahoma pastor prophesied that Bishop Wanjiru was marked for government, she ran for parliament. And, unlike many pastor-cum-aspirants in America, she won; now, the local press refers to her as the Hon. Bishop Dr. Margaret Wanjiru. (She holds a correspondence degree.)

Her Christmas Day service is full of energy. Floodlights illuminate the stage, bongos rattle tensely, and as things get underway Bishop Wanjiru sashays across the elevated dais at the front of the church, kicking her legs high as she leads the choir. It is an impressive display, and after ten minutes of frenetic dancing the tightly packed rows of chairs in the church are entirely disordered.

Bishop Wanjiru's services are long. Five hours is typical. But people stick around, and one soon feels they are waiting for something. Finally the climax arrives: Wanjiru holds out her hands to the audience and encourages them to feel the Holy Spirit. Many do. In the aisle to my right, a fiftysomething in a lime-green pantsuit begins to jump up and down with a vigor uncommon among women of her stoutness. She topples over and others follow, ushers struggling to pull apart the dogpile of the possessed. One of the church's three cameramen zooms in, and the close-up of the lady in green convulsing violently, her eyes rolling madly, is simulcast to the television sets around the church. Scenes like this often make the cut when the service is reduced into snippets for Wanjiru's TV program. Some of the afflicted begin to scream; one barks. Wanjiru enumerates the powers of Christ and at last calls on the intercession of His Spirit, whereupon the women collapse, a heap of polyester on the concrete floor, and lie unconscious for several minutes before the ushers help them to their seats.

Wanjiru's and congregations like it constitute the most vibrant strain of Christianity in Africa today: independent Pentecostal churches whose fortunes are hitched to an individual pastor's charisma and ability, à la the Acts of the Apostles, to work miracles by the intercession of the Holy Spirit.

In America, although thousands of churches invoke the Spirit every Sunday, Pentecostalism has long been the eccentric little brother of mainstream evangelical Christianity. It is one thing to be "born again": To use a current example, Mike Huckabee describes his personal salvation, at age ten, as a feeling of being overwhelmed by a sensation of cleanliness, after which, he says, he never wanted to be dirty again. It would be quite another thing for the former governor of Arkansas to begin delivering a message from God in an antique tongue.

Yet in this respect Africa has moved away from America. Prophesying in tongues, demon possession, and charismatic healing are not on the margins, but are part of the African mainstream. And while pundits regularly talk up the magnitude of evangelicalism in America, and its implications on culture and politics, Africa's Pentecostal awakening dwarfs it. It is hard to overstate the magnitude of this shift; as a percentage and in absolute numbers, the exodus from Africa's established to new Pentecostal churches like Wanjiru's is larger than the change wrought by the Reformation in Europe. One recent Pew survey claimed that Pentecostals do not constitute merely a plurality among Kenyan Christians, but are 57 percent of all Kenyans.

A HISTORIC FAITH

Sixty years ago, Pentecostals barely existed in Africa. In calling Pentecostal preachers "charlatans culled from the dregs of society," one British colonial governor summed up the prevailing attitude. Their participatory and wild-eyed services were prone, it was thought, to foster disorder. Laws that governed the registration of societies provided a vehicle that allowed many colonial governments to stymie the work of the more colorful Christian churches.

In the meantime, Catholics, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans, and a handful of other churches spread throughout Africa, often outpacing the reach of the inchoate colonial governments. Indeed, these churches often filled the role of government. In the 20th century, most Africans received their education, their health care, and their mail—insofar as these things existed at all—from the mainstream churches. A great many Africans still do.

Therein lay Christianity's historic power of persuasion in Africa. It was the front guard and exemplar of a wealthier, more powerful civilization; it brought to all corners of Africa those things that are now commonplace on the continent but that an African living in the early 1900s would never have seen before. But this prestige was both a blessing and a curse. To become a Christian was to accept Christ, as it is everywhere and always, but it also meant adopting an alien form of worship with clerical practitioners who were the most clear and present symbol of the new European presence in Africa.

European missionaries tried to adapt their evangelism to the place and equate Christianity with the fundamental questions of an African's life. The Bible was, of course, translated widely and

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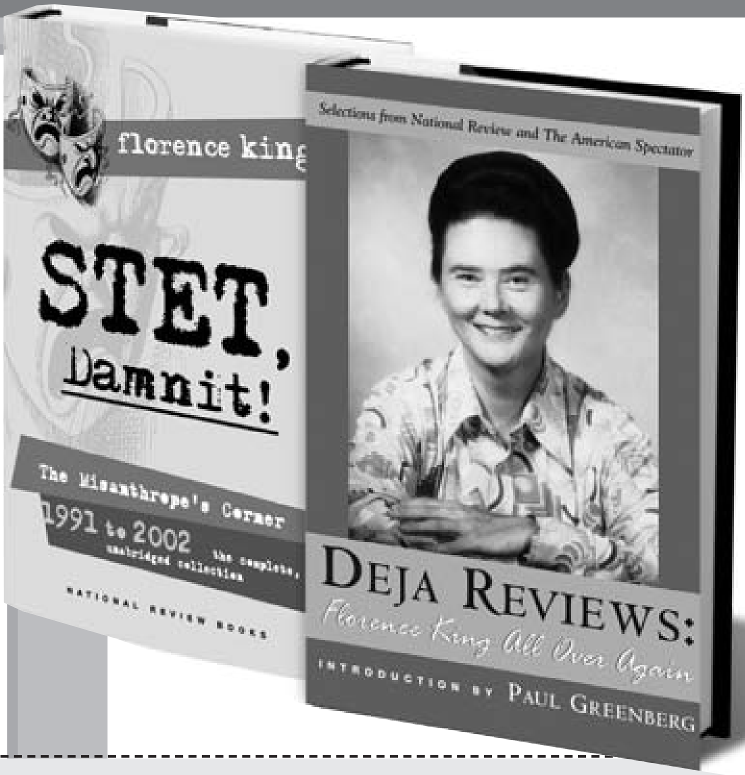
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liberally—into over a dozen tribal languages in Kenya alone, a translation in Maasai being by necessity of the language's smaller lexicon less precise and more extemporaneous than, say, the German translations. The adornments of Christianity were also tinkered with. Where fertility cults were prominent, Marian figurines were popular. Tellingly, the most prolific group of Catholic missionaries, the White Fathers, owes its name to the white robes—of a type usually associated with Muslim imams—that its clerics donned in the order's first missions in Algeria.

These alterations to Christianity's exterior were one thing, but little of a fundamental nature changed. Being in communion with another church meant, even for Protestants, a mostly common liturgy; outward appearances notwithstanding, a church in Kampala would not seem so different from one in York once you were inside the sanctuary. Even Africans who went to seminary emerged largely as intended—looking the part of the local, but behaving as a priestly class hardened against indigenous influences. Deviations, in any case, were looked after by an ecclesiastical hierarchy with real powers to sanction and to forbid.

TV evangelist Benny Hinn—big in Africa

DAVE YODER/NEWSCOM

As the decades wore on, the dazzle of Europe wore off. Many Africans became city-dwellers; labor organizations and political parties calling for self-rule gained popularity; and by World War II, when the imperial powers spoke the language of democracy to promote African military recruitment and took out loans with their colonies, Europe hardly seemed invincible. In the war's wake, British, French, and Belgian colonial governments everywhere suffered a crisis of confidence: How do you simultaneously remain a colony and fulfill the wartime promise of fair and equal treatment? Some, especially those with large settler constituencies, turned paranoid and reactionary, but many more embarked on desperate programs of liberalization to make empire acceptable to a post-war world. One major change was a loosening of the restrictions on missions; these rules had always seemed contrary to the European powers' stated democratic principles.

At the same moment, America found itself apotheosized, and—though it lacked the enormous geographic empire of Britain, which still spanned one-sixth of the world—this novel power certainly stood to foster a cultural empire. In the 1950s America sent Hollywood, jazz, and many other things—among them, thousands of low-church Protestants—to far parts of the world. Larger groups like the Assemblies of God had a seat at the table, but so did an untold number of small missionary efforts, which mushroomed throughout Africa because of the vitality of their American home congregations. Evangelists including Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, and T. L. Osborn began to pay visits to East Africa, occasions that Damaris Parsitau, a lecturer in religion at Kenya's Egerton University, says had "a direct influence in the emergence of various Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in Kenya today."

BEWITCHED

Even in postcolonial Africa, the historic churches could count among their parishioners the governing elite of newly independent states. Evangelical Christians were typically the poor and uneducated. Among this audience, preachers experimented.

In a way, such experimentation is what evangelical Christianity is all about: the individual's worship of and salvation by Christ. There is no pretense to universal salvation within a particular organization; if excommunication pains the Catholic priest, evangelicals have no such hang-up. In Africa, evangelicals and Pentecostals have probably suffered more schisms in 50 years than Catholicism has in its two millennia.

This has given the movement's leaders a freer hand than their counterparts in the professional clergies. And as evangelical Christianity fermented for its first 30 years in Africa, its preachers soon found that a successful member of their ranks was someone who emphasized Pentecostalism: the idea that the Holy Spirit routinely intercedes in everyday life. Pentecostalism proved momentous at a time when Africans' relationship with Europe and its traditions was being questioned. Most traditional African religions brooked the belief that faith was a useful business in which miracle- or mischief-working was de rigueur. It is a belief that might be approximately understood as "witchcraft."

After a century of modernization in Africa, it's remarkable how resilient witchcraft beliefs have been, even as Africans are prepared to accept concurrent explanations of causation. A mother today might understand, for instance, that her child's recurrent malaria is an infection by protozoa, but for many Africans the question remains: Who sent the protozoa? In this view of the world, there are maleficent acts, like making a child ill, and also what once was called "white magic" in Europe. Part of this latter variant is botanical and legitimate—not so much witchcraft as early pharmaceuticals. But much more is spurious: prophesying by casting a fowl's entrails (a practice as common in Africa now as it was in ancient Rome), the precarious balancing of an enchanted egg on a fencepost for virility or luck in finances, and so on.

These beliefs persist, and they are not limited to the poorest and most desperate Africans. During soccer championships and elections, witch doctors experience a boon as strikers and coaches, parliamentary and municipal aspirants flock to seek their counsel. This past campaign season, hundreds of politicians visited a rock shrine near Lake Victoria reputedly guarded by a magical python named Nyang'idi; indeed, its entrances were festooned with party colors. Kenya's leading newspapers even carry witch doctors' advertisements. One recent quarter-page ad offered confidential services for candidates in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, some thousand miles away. "The Kenya Election is in the Stars. Sheikh Yayha has Instant Celestial Formula that can put you to the top," it read, inviting candidates to visit the website www.astrosheik-tz.com.

Such beliefs were never reconciled with Christianity during colonial times. European missionaries taught that witchcraft beliefs were to be deprecated as baseless superstitions, and that a faithful Christian's divine reward was deferred, and not material. With Pentecostals' suggestion that one didn't have to die to be rewarded, that what was needed was to sieve the demonic witchcraft from the godly variety, Africa's old beliefs finally have found a Christian outlet.

Faced with parishioners who still believe quietly in the old ways, even mainstream churches have been forced to confront the subject. The past several decades have witnessed the first full-fledged discussion of witchcraft since Cotton Mather and his contemporaries' dissection of the Salem trials. By and large the theology of Pentecostalism has carried the day in Africa. Not only have the historic churches lost hundreds of millions of parishioners in a generation's time, they have in many ways been Pentecostalized. The presbyter of Kenya, who holds a seat once regarded as staunchly conservative, has even written a latter-day treatise on demonology, wherein he attributes many of his country's ills to the "satanic" colonial-era frescoes that decorate the Parliament chamber. Members of the clergy have gone into schism. One of the largest Pentecostal churches in Tanzania, to Kenya's south, is the Marian Faith Healing Ministry, led by Felician Nkwera, an ex–Catholic priest. His treatment at the hands of the Church hierarchy is a textbook case of the ambivalence racking mainstream Christianity in Africa today. When Nkwera began to offer Masses in which Mary would possess members of the flock, the Irish White Father then in charge of the parish forbade them. A bishop of the diocese, an African, reversed the Irish priest; and in turn the metropolitan archbishop, some say on orders from then-Cardinal Ratzinger, reversed him. Notwithstanding the sensational test cases, all of Africa's mainstream churches today make room for services where parishioners follow a rougher liturgy, punctuating the service with ululations, clapping, and testimony.

Some of the key figures in African Pentecostalism have a Western background. Juanita Bynum, a "prophetess" who preaches that a pastor's success will entail that of her parishioners; Benny Hinn, a healer of ailments from epilepsy to AIDS; and the German evangelist Reinhard Bonnke, who reputedly resurrected a Nigerian minister who had been dead for at least 42 hours—all of these figures are now widely known in Africa, their inspirational literature more available than a Shakespeare play or, for that matter, anything besides the Bible and nationally designated textbooks. Their programs are rebroadcast on television, their sermons are sold on cassette and CD, and their frequent visits in person are well remunerated.

While American pastors are still important and popular in Africa, they are so only insofar as they, like the locals, believe in such things as demon possession. In this regard, they have ceased to be ambassadors of a truly American movement. Indeed, it is telling that while Americans once might have come to Africa with money in their pockets to found congregations and evangelize, it is now people like Wanjiru who are sending their parishioners' shillings to America's fringe Pentecostals.

When Christianity gained a foothold in Africa, the same type of religion was also a crucial element in European culture. The connection between European and African Christianity continued for a long time, ensured by a professional clergy and a whole parallel government of social-welfare programs. While America's rise may have been, likewise, the engine for the propagation of evangelical Christianity in Africa, no deep roots were sown. And in the years since, the faith has been Africanized, and its resemblance to evangelicalism's American progenitors all but lost. **NR**

■ **CULTURE WATCH**

One for Freedom

Meet a popular musician who says he supports the troops—and means it

JOHN J. MILLER

On the night of February 9, more than a thousand people gathered in tuxes and dresses at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library to pay tribute to Medal of Honor recipients. Forty-three of the 107 living medalists were in attendance, along with assorted dignitaries. The program began when John Ondrasik, a one-man act who goes by the improbable stage name of "Five for Fighting," sat before a piano and sang about war and patriotism. When he was done, Ondrasik briefly addressed the crowd. "That song, 'Freedom Never Cries,' hopefully demonstrates the theme for this evening, which is that freedom isn't free. But I don't need to tell you that."

No, he didn't. Not to that crowd of heroes and their admirers. But in recent years, Ondrasik has conveyed this message to a broader public that surely can benefit from hearing it. Whereas many celebrities attack the president and bash the war with a relentless and numbing predictability, Ondrasik, the author of hits such as "Superman (It's Not Easy)" and "100 Years," stands apart as a popular artist who supports the troops and their cause through his music and actions. And he is without a doubt the only rock star ever to write a song inspired by a lunch with National Review contributor Victor Davis Hanson.

The 43-year-old Vladimir John Ondrasik III was a math major at UCLA who might have led a perfectly comfortable life helping his family run a small business that manufactures shopping carts in Southern California. From an early age, however, his passion was music. Even as an adult, he dreamed of turning it into a career. "I put on a suit by day and went into the studio at night," he says. "For years, I got nowhere."

He finally scored a record deal in 1996, but there were problems from the start. An executive told Ondrasik that the days of the singer-songwriter were over and ordered him to come up with a name that sounded like he was a full rock band. Ondrasik proposed "Marketing Ploy," which apparently wasn't met with a smile. So he suggested "Five for Fighting," a reference to the five-minute penalty a hockey player receives for on-ice fisticuffs. It might have been a better fit for head-bangers or punk rockers than for a guy who specializes in soulful vocals and piano-driven ballads, but Ondrasik is a sports nut, and it stuck. Unfortunately, his label didn't—it shuttered in 1997, just as Five for Fighting's debut album was coming out. "I think it sold about 500 copies," he says.

So Ondrasik started over. The experience was agonizing, but he kept writing songs. Ondrasik says he can spend more than a year on a single tune, refining the lyrics and melody until he thinks they're just right. At one point during this period, however, he composed an entire song in about 45 minutes. "It pretty much wrote itself," he says. "I got lucky." The lyrics expressed the vulnerability and frustration he was feeling at the time: "It may sound absurd / But don't be naïve / Even heroes have the right to bleed." He called it "Superman," and he wasn't sure whether he liked it.

Meanwhile, Ondrasik secured a new record deal—certainly not based on the commercial strength of Five for Fighting's debut, but because a label thought he showed promise and was willing to take a chance. When choosing from among several dozen songs he had written for what would become his second album, *America Town*, he couldn't make up his mind about whether to include "Superman." At the last moment, he decided to use it.

Ondrasik performs in New York.

KRISTIN CALLAHAN/ACE PICTURES

This was perhaps the best professional choice he ever made. *America Town* came out in 2000 and produced a minor hit with a song called "Easy Tonight." The next year saw the release of "Superman" as a single. It turned into a hit as well—not a huge one, but big enough. Then came 9/11.

'SUPERMAN' TAKES FLIGHT

"I was in London when it happened," says Ondrasik. "All I could do was sit in front of a television in a hotel and watch in horror." Before long, news channels started running montages of rescue workers amid the rubble of the World Trade Center—and they often used "Superman" as the soundtrack. The song went from small success to near-iconic status.

Back in the States, Ondrasik was on tour when he received a letter from Earl Holland, a New York City paramedic, who described how much "Superman" meant to him. He asked Ondrasik to dedicate it to those who had died at Ground Zero. Ondrasik obliged and read the letter during a concert in Chicago. The cable channel VH-1 heard about it and invited Ondrasik to perform at the Concert for New York City at Madison Square Garden, alongside some of the biggest names in popular music. "Every one of my living inspirations was on stage—Paul McCartney, Pete Townshend, Billy Joel," he says. "I still can't believe I was there." During the show, held on October 20, Holland introduced Ondrasik, who performed "Superman" to thunderous applause.

By now, Ondrasik was a full-time musician on the periphery of stardom. His third album, *The Battle for Everything*, came out in 2004 and yielded another smash hit: "100 Years." A couple of its cuts, such as "NYC Weather Report" and "Infidel," were more topical—a trend that would continue two years later when his next album, *Two Lights*, came out.

The title track of *Two Lights* was born at a lunch with Victor Davis Hanson. "I had enjoyed a lot of his writing on military history and the War on Terror. A mutual friend asked if I wanted to meet him and I said sure," says Ondrasik. They got together at a coffee shop in Palo Alto, Calif., and Hanson invited Ondrasik to join him for lunch with a former student who was about to deploy to Iraq with the Marines, as well as the young man's father, a Vietnam veteran.

At lunch, Ondrasik talked to the dad. "I asked him how he was doing," says Ondrasik. "He sat back, closed his eyes, and said, 'It's really hard on his mom.' It was obviously hard on him, too. I saw the natural fear of a parent as well as pride in a son who is carrying on a tradition." Afterward, Ondrasik wrote the song "Two Lights," about a father who hears that a member of his son's unit has been killed. The man decides to go for a nighttime drive and asks his wife to leave on two lights if she hears their son is alive. When he returns home just before sunup, he looks at his house, hoping for two lights, and says "my eyes burn." The meaning is ambiguous. "I had to leave it open-ended, because sometimes the news is good and sometimes it's bad," says Ondrasik. "The song symbolizes the no man's land that these families live in every day."

Ondrasik says he has gained a special sympathy for military families through his work with the USO. He has visited injured soldiers at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center and he has performed for troops at military bases in California, Guam, and Japan—and even at Guantánamo Bay in Cuba. When he tours in the United States, he tries to make free tickets available to soldiers posted at nearby bases. "I don't like it when artists let politics creep into their performances and I try not to make speeches," he says. "But in my shows, I always tell the story of 'Two Lights.'"

So far, *Two Lights* has produced at least a pair of certified hits, "The Riddle" and "World." A third song didn't make the charts but is starting to show staying power: "Freedom Never Cries." It's the song Ondrasik recently played for the Medal of Honor recipients. "I wrote it because I was tired of people raising their eyebrows whenever they heard the word 'freedom,' as if they don't appreciate what we have in this country and what allows us to have it." At the heart of the song is a line that embodies the idea that freedom isn't free: "I never loved the soldier until there was a war." The second stanza ties it all to the threat of Islamofascism:

I saw a man on the TV
In a mask with a gun
A man on the TV
He had a 10-year-old son
I saw a man on the TV
His son had a gun
He says that he's coming for me.

And in case anybody still doesn't grasp the point, there's the just-released video, which features images of al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, Gen. David Petraeus, and purple-fingered Iraqi voters.

Last year, at Grammys on the Hill, a lobbying event for the recording industry, Ondrasik elected to sing "Freedom Never Cries." "Everyone was expecting me to play 'Superman' and '100 Years,' but on my way up to the piano I decided that if there was ever a time to play 'Freedom Never Cries,' and if there was ever an audience that ought to hear it, this was it." As he left the stage, Republican congresswoman Mary Bono Mack of California rushed to him and held up her iPod. By coincidence, she had been listening to the song earlier in the day, while working out in the House gym. "I didn't even know that he was going to be there that evening," she says. "I knew a few of his other songs and was listening to this one, trying to figure out if he's a conservative or a liberal—you know, one of us or one of them."

A TONIC FOR THE TROOPS

As it happens, Ondrasik calls himself a "moderate Republican." He has supported John McCain for president through thick and thin, even during the period last year when it looked like McCain's campaign was on the brink of collapse. On February 5, he attended McCain's Super Tuesday victory party in Phoenix. "I'd never been to something like that before," he says. Rather than hopping on anybody's bandwagon, however, he has tried to support the troops by taking advantage of his new political connections with the likes of Rep. Bono Mack and Minnesota senator Norm Coleman, who hosted Ondrasik at a GOP steering-committee meeting in December. The result is an unlikely musical collaboration between Washington and Hollywood, or at least those parts that are willing to honor military service.

In 2006, a non-profit group called Music for Troops asked Ondrasik to write the liner notes for a compilation of songs by unsigned artists that it was planning to distribute to the military. "That gave me the idea to do the same thing with popular artists and songs we know," says Ondrasik. It sounded easy, but it turned out to be much harder than he had anticipated and occupied him for most of last year. "I thought we'd find a corporate sponsor, someone who would write us a big check," he recalls. Instead, he approached about two dozen potential funders and struck out with each one. "After four or five months of this, I was getting frustrated." Finally, Kraig Kitchin, an executive then with Premiere Radio Networks, convinced his company to pitch in $50,000. Ondrasik agreed to match it, and he began to envision an effort scaled back from his original plans.

But he didn't give up entirely. Last summer, he sent out an e-mail to a few friends, asking them for assistance. The actor Gary Sinise, who got to know Ondrasik through Rep. Bono Mack and others, received the message. "We both support the troops and I wanted to help out," says Sinise, who has visited Iraq three times and Afghanistan once through the USO. Sinise contacted David McIntyre, the CEO of TriWest, a company that provides health-care services to the military, and TriWest decided to donate $250,000. Later, Sony offered to press 200,000 copies of *For the Troops*.

Following this surge of support, Ondrasik still needed to recruit the talent. He had received a few verbal commitments from a handful of artists, but these needed to become formal contracts drawn up by lawyers. Not only did the musicians have to grant permission to give away their songs, so did labels, songwriters, and managers. "The list of who declined is a lot longer than the list of who agreed," says Ondrasik. He won't mention which performers turned him down, but he allows that "politics had a lot to do with it."

The process was intense, and Ondrasik credits Mitch Bainwol of the Recording Industry Association of America with making it run as quickly and smoothly as possible. In the end, 13 artists and groups participated, including Billy Joel, Brooks & Dunn, Jewel, Josh Groban, and the Neville Brothers. "Some of the contributors actually oppose the war, but they all wanted to support the troops without respect to partisanship," he says. *For the Troops* came out at Thanksgiving. Most of the compact discs have been distributed through the USO and other organizations. What's more, a website run by the Army & Air Force Exchange Service allows active-duty personnel to download individual songs for free. So far, that's happened about 250,000 times.

Ondrasik wants to spend much of 2008 on a new Five for Fighting album. But he's also thinking about the next thing he'll do for the troops—possibly another CD, and almost certainly more performances. "I feel an obligation to support the war effort," he says. "This is the most important cause of our time. I can't shoot a gun and I'm too old for service. But maybe I can help with morale, and with the morale of the families. We all have to do our part, whatever our skills are."

Five for Fighting won't ever earn a Medal of Honor—but at least John Ondrasik is available for encores. **NR**

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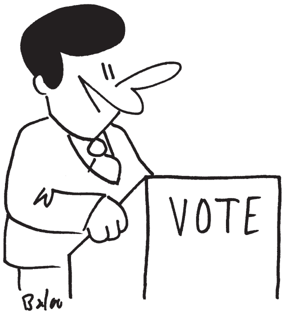
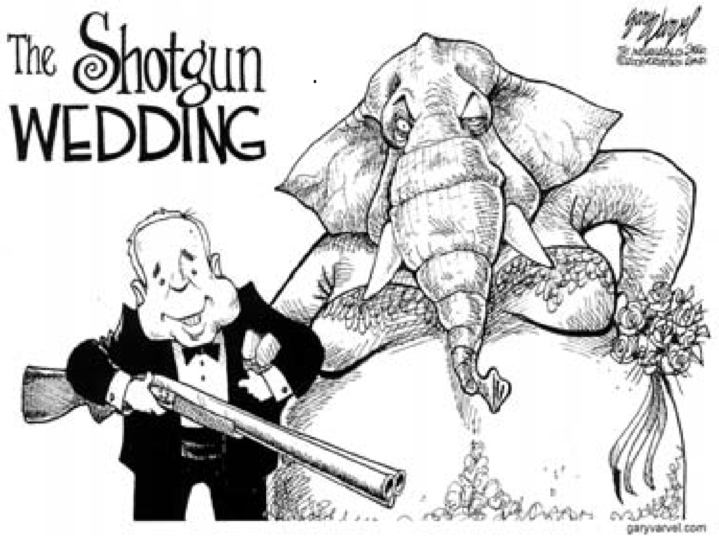


"When one door closes, another opens—but enough about immigration reform . . ."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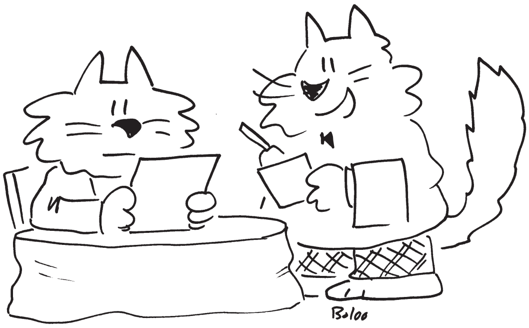
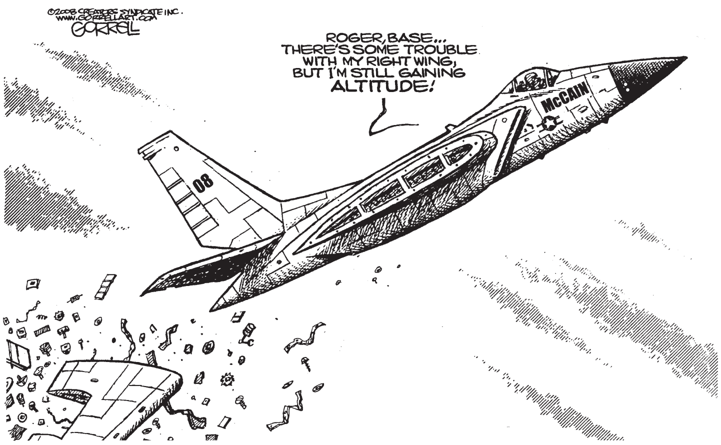


"The mouse? Excellent choice, sir—dead or alive?"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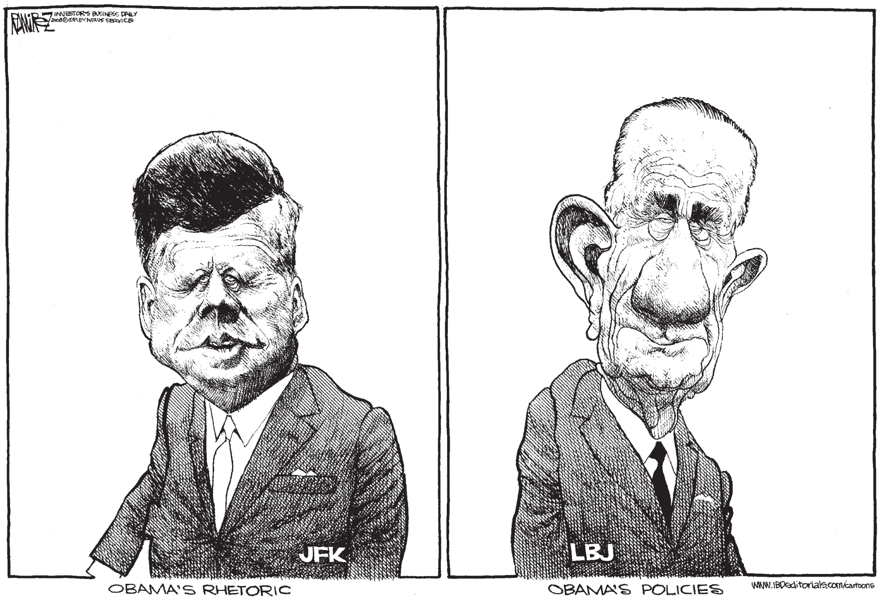
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O JAY, CAN YOU SEE?

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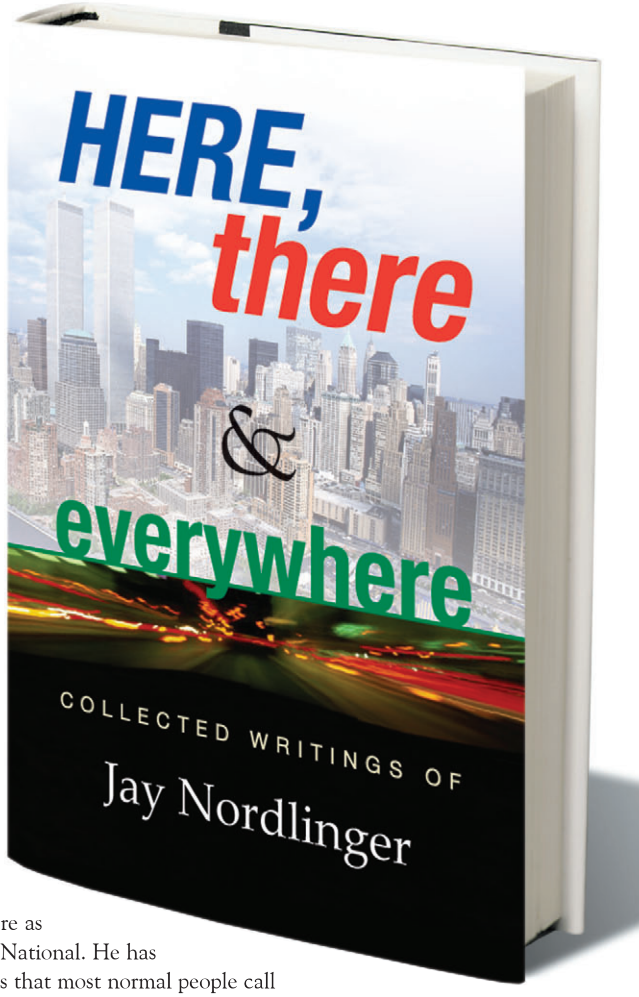

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ROB LONG

THE DELEGATE'S MAILBAG

Dear Democratic Party Committed Delegate:

Hard to believe it's been sixteen years since I took the stage at our historic convention and accepted our party's nomination for the presidency!

But this letter isn't about me. It's about my wife, Senator Hillary Clinton.

Yes, sixteen years ago I promised the American people a new beginning—an end to the failed economic policies of the past, and a partnership to the 21st century. Together, I told the crowd, we will build a great new future for America.

But enough about me. This isn't about me.

I went on to preside over eight years of economic growth and prosperity unmatched in our nation's history. Crime rates plummeted. The deficit disappeared. Unemployment dropped to its lowest point ever, and the economy grew faster than ever.

But that's the past. That's me. And we're not here to talk about me.

What I accomplished—and it was a lot, I think you'll agree—I did only because of the teamwork and support I got from my wife, Hillary Clinton. She and I *both* worked hard to make sure that I could achieve such amazing successes, and it was she, I think, who put it best. "You really did accomplish a lot of great things, Bill," she said to me.

And now the time is critical. Our party and our mission are being sidetracked into a distracting primary fight that will only serve the interests of the Republican party.

I know what you're saying: "Hey, Bill, I'm already committed! My convention vote is spoken for! Sure I'd love to help you save the Democratic party—again—but my hands are tied!"

Not so!

It all depends on what the definition of "committed" is. And according to the bylaws of our great party, the definition is . . . not really committed at all!

What does this mean for you?

It means you can easily, without fear of retribution, march onto the convention floor in Denver and cast your vote for the woman whose husband you so fondly remember breathing new life and new energy into the Democratic party. It means that you don't have to be disenfranchised by petty, arcane rules devised by party bureaucrats in order to keep decent, inspiring, hugely popular ex-presidents from helping their wives get elected.

They'll cry "foul!" They'll cry "not fair!"

But it will be fair. And it's completely legal under the current system.

And even though I'm the first one to say that this isn't about me, don't you think I deserve it?

So, please. This summer, cast your vote—committed or not—for the wife of Bill Clinton.

Sincerely,
Bill Clinton

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How can we offer this?

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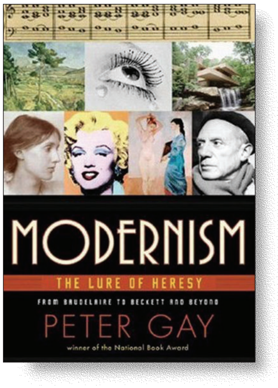

Modernism: The Lure of Heresy: From Baudelaire to Beckett and Beyond, by Peter Gay (Norton, 640 pp., $35)

ROGER KIMBALL

WHAT is modernism? It is a testimony to the complexity, or possibly to the recalcitrance, of the idea that you come away from the 640 pages of Peter Gay's ambitious inquiry into the subject and are still not sure of the answer. The uncertainty is not, or at least not entirely, Gay's fault. The word covers a multitude of activities, attitudes, accomplishments, and aberrations—and that's just to begin with the A's. Whatever it is, modernism is something more than a merely chronological marker, more than a fancy synonym for "modern." As Gay notes early on, modernism, like pornography, is a phenomenon that is "far easier to exemplify than define." He tells us he toyed with the idea of embracing the "prudential plural"—modernisms—but rejected that pusillanimous alternative. What he is after in this book is not a definition, then, or even a history, but a sort of characterological profile: a dossier of intellectual birth marks that would allow us to identify the "mindset," the climate of aesthetic endeavor, that was recognizably "modernist."

Let me say at the outset that I am not sure that Gay succeeds in providing even this more circumscribed taxonomy. Let me say, too, that this failure scarcely diminishes the pleasure one may take from his book. Now in his mid-80s, the German-born Sterling Professor Emeritus at Yale has been providing elegant examples of intellectual history for decades. Admirers of his prolific work on the European Enlightenment will find evidence of that ironically disabused and cosmopolitan spirit here: a scholar who writes well, who has a nose for balderdash, and whose wide appetite for culture makes him an entertaining and informative cicerone no matter what the itinerary. Admirers of Gay's equally prolific work on Freud—who is a presiding deity in this book—will find evidence of that long discipleship here as well. My point is that *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy* is one of those Big Books whose value is rightly measured less by its success in tackling its announced subject than by the sensibility and intellectual vitality of its author. Gay has supped long and thoughtfully at the table of European culture. Readers may find what he says more or less pertinent to the subject at hand; rarely will they find it dull or uninspiring.

I'll come in a moment to the ways in which I think Gay's characterization of modernism falls short. But let me start with two of his most pregnant insights into the nature of modernism. The first is his counterintuitive emphasis on the fact that modernism, despite its sometimes anti-bourgeois rhetoric, is in fact a deeply bourgeois, which also means a deeply urban, phenomenon, dependent for its values as well as its institutions on the surrounding bourgeois culture that nurtures it through the expediency of irritation and antagonism. That insight will strike many as counterintuitive precisely because of the oppositional posture adopted by many (though hardly all) modernists. Indeed, Gay might profitably have referred to "Postmodern: Art and Culture in the 1980s," a brilliant essay by my colleague Hilton Kramer. Noting the curious "institutionalization of the avant-garde"—curious because the avant-garde had made it a point of pride to rebel against the stricture of institutions—Kramer limned the cultural metabolism that underlay the dialectic of modernism and its aftermath:

> Much—if not quite everything—that we continue to esteem in the creative achievements of the last two centuries owes its existence to this curious compact between the bourgeoisie and its licensed opposition. But the dynamism of the avant-garde, with its unremitting appetite for innovation and its steady erosion of established values—including the values established by its own efforts—came in time to exert a powerful control over the very culture it still ostensibly "opposed." So completely did the bourgeois society cede its cultural initiatives to this licensed opposition that the terms of their compact came to be fatefully altered. It was now the avant-garde that dominated cultural life—thus, in effect, ceasing to function as an authentic avant-garde—and the surviving remnants of bourgeois "reaction" that went through the motions of a principled resistance.

Gay's discussion usefully presupposes the tensions that Kramer describes. If he slights the capitulations that Kramer enumerates, that is largely because he has a broader, less demanding view of what modernism encompasses. A second key insight Gay offers his readers concerns the link between religion—more specifically, the attenuation of religion—and the advent of modernism. Even before 1900, Gay notes, Western culture was entering a "post-Christian era." This situation was discerned by thinkers as different as Friedrich Nietzsche, with his melancholy proclamation that "God is dead," and Matthew Arnold, who stood on Dover Beach listening to the "melancholy, long, withdrawing roar" that announced the ebbing of the Sea of Faith. Modernism was the species of strenuous cultural endeavor that rushed in to fill the spiritual vacuum left by diminishments elsewhere in the economy of religious aspiration. As Wallace Stevens observed, "In the absence of a belief in God, poetry is that essence which takes its place as life's redemption," where by "poetry" we should understand a synecdoche for serious artistic ambition generally.

Mr. Kimball is publisher of Encounter Books, and co-editor and co-publisher of *The New Criterion.*

VOL. CLVII....No. 30,000 **The Stauer Times** "It's About Time"

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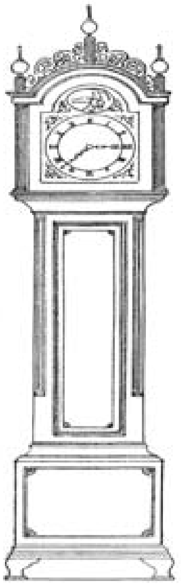
It is worth pausing here to take a distinction on board. Modernism presupposes a crisis in (which is not the same thing as a rejection of) religious values. But that does not mean that modernism is another version of that aestheticism whose essential ambition is to make art into a substitute religion. Few figures embody the tenets of high modernism more effulgently than T. S. Eliot. The case of Eliot is especially instructive, for two reasons. First, Eliot was a thoroughgoing innovator who also understood that tradition was the enabler, not the enemy of innovation. Second, Eliot understood the distinctive character of modernism's existential ambitions in the spiritual economy of contemporary life. "Nothing in this world or the next," Eliot wrote in an essay on Arnold and Walter Pater,

> is a substitute for anything else; and if you find that you must do without something, such as religious faith or philosophic belief, then you must just do without it. I can persuade myself . . . that some of the things that I can hope to get are better worth having than some of the things I cannot get; or I may hope to alter myself so as to want different things; but I cannot persuade myself that it is the same desires that are satisfied, or that I have in effect the same thing under a different name.



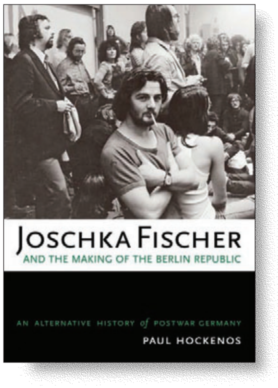
The key to the modernist enterprise, at least in its most spiritually ambitious allotropes, requires that we hold on to both Stevens's artistic hubris and Eliot's astringent discriminations. In that taut space we find the core of the modernist achievement, an achievement figured by such names as Eliot (almost an ex officio member) as well as James Joyce, Thomas Mann, Igor Stravinsky, George Balanchine, Marcel Proust, and Henri Matisse.

This roster could, and should, be plumped out considerably. Gay, offering his own preliminary list, mentions "a poem by Arthur Rimbaud, a novel by Franz Kafka, a piano piece by Erik Satie, a play by Samuel Beckett, a painting—*any* painting—by Pablo Picasso." Okay, fine. I am happy to grant entry visas to all of them, with the caveat that in my view Picasso ceased being a modernist around the end of World War II—but that is a subject for discussion on another occasion over a glass of port. More troubling is the relative ranking Gay assigns to the deities in his modernist pantheon. One wonders, for example, whether Knut Hamsun, the Norwegian novelist and Nazi enthusiast, belongs among the "key modernists"? He won a Nobel Prize in 1920, but that is no badge of accomplishment (how do you spell "Pearl S. Buck," for example?). And does it really help to refer to T. S. Eliot as a "bigoted high Anglican" or August Strindberg as a "hysterical anti-feminist"?

Gay traces a movement from the birth of modernism through maturity, senescence, and, at the end of his book, possible rebirth. He is good on some of the corrosive forces that undermined the integrity of the modernist project. His tart pages on Marcel Duchamp and Pop Art are particularly good. But when I tell you that among his candidates for rebirth are the novelist Gabriel García Márquez and the PoMo architect Frank Gehry you will understand that the "life after death" he forecasts for modernism is less than convincing.

Also dubious, I believe, are the defining attributes Gay proposes to distinguish modernism from other sorts of cultural endeavor: Modernists "of all stripes," he says, "shared two defining attributes": "the lure of heresy" and "a commitment to principled self-scrutiny." But surely a commitment to "principled self-scrutiny" is as old as Socrates' urging that "the unexamined life is not worth living"? Was Socrates a modernist? If so, Gay's book should have been much, much longer and it would be knock-off time for all concerned. And what about "the lure of heresy"? It may be heretical to propose, but I'd say that the urge to inhabit an orthodoxy freshly purged of heresy was at least as important an ingredient in the work of many emblematic modernists from T. E. Hulme and Eliot on down. Gay is on to *something* here, but I suspect that Eliot may have had it right when (in a passage Gay does not quote) he describes the heretic as someone who seizes upon a truth and pushes it until it becomes a falsehood. **NR**

King Fischer

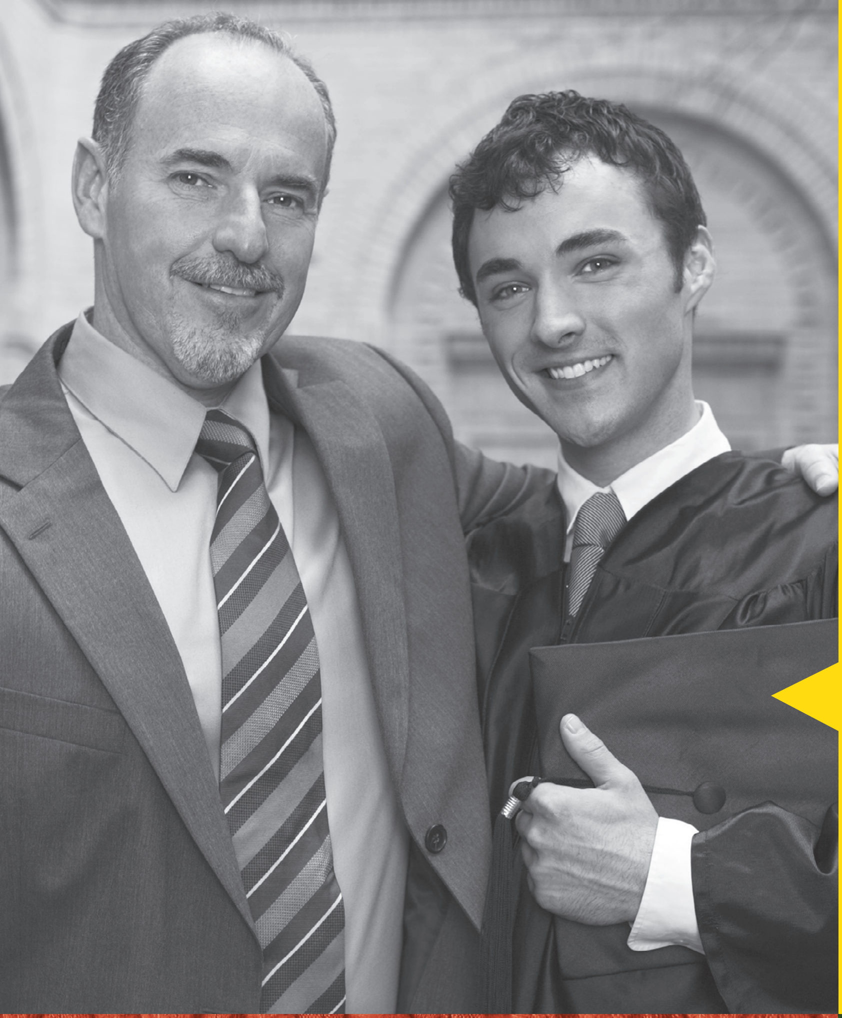

JOSCHKA FISCHER
AND THE MAKING OF THE BERLIN REPUBLIC
AN ALTERNATIVE HISTORY of POSTWAR GERMANY
PAUL HOCKENOS

Joschka Fischer and the Making of the Berlin Republic: An Alternative History of Postwar Germany, by Paul Hockenos (Oxford, 400 pp., $35)

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

A PRIORITY in the post-1945 world order was to make Germany a normal nation. The effort might easily have failed; whether justly or unjustly, Germans as a whole were perceived as perpetrators of mass murder and moral outcasts who had brought reprisal and suffering on themselves. The Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe expelled ethnic Germans to the West by the million. A good part of the country was also lost as a Soviet satellite, and a police state apparently too controlled ever to break free. The Iron Curtain dividing the two Germanys was an inflammable frontline throughout the Cold War. Righting the wrongs of Nazism was not a clear-cut matter.

In these conditions of national and psychological distress, the Germans might have rallied to someone promising vengeance, as Hitler had once done. In the absence of such a figure, two conservative chancellors, Konrad Adenauer and Helmut Kohl, were responsible for the country's reconstruction during their long periods in office. Adenauer's overriding idea was that Germany should link its fate to that of the United States, and so help keep the peace. Kohl did not disagree, but



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he had his overriding idea as well: that Germany should link its fate to the European Union, and that this would keep the peace even more securely. A country duly emerged that was hard-working, conventionally respectable in manners and thinking, more or less apolitical—a ghostly version of an idealized past that Germans actually had never known.

On the left, the Social Democrats became so desperate for power that they dropped their brand of Marxist socialism and became hard to distinguish from the conservatives. To many of those born after 1945, this consensus seemed to impose a code of conduct that stifled choice and imagination, and even freedom. From the Sixties onward, assorted anarchists, Marxists and Trotskyites, hippies and drop-outs occupied houses and squatted in them, attended the same radical courses at universities, and marched together in demonstrations in search of peace, love, and brotherhood. They had no real program but hoped to find one by taking to the streets.

Paul Hockenos has had the good idea of fitting Fischer's mind-boggling career into the wider story of how Germany has dealt with its Hitler legacy and acquired its present character.

This protest movement was motivated by guilt over the Nazism of its participants' parents, but it was also caught up in a worldwide illusion of the moment, that "doing your thing" was some sort of ideal—universal, cost-free, and entirely realistic. Like other countries, Germany was already rich and secure enough to ride it out. What it could not afford was the Red Army Faction, or RAF, and the Baader-Meinhof gang. These were mostly lumpen-intellectuals whose limitless resentments drove them to take up arms and resort to terror. Abducting and murdering prominent personalities, they were also in secret contact with the KGB on the other side of the Iron Curtain. Evidently Hitler's stormtroopers remodeled, and even anti-Jewish to cap it all, they were a sinister threat to the state's fledgling democracy.

Most of the RAF and the Baader-Meinhof gang have been captured and condemned to prison, and their notorious leaders were found dead in their cells, killed by their own hand or—according to conspiracy theorists—by the police. Joschka Fischer swam in those murky waters, and his trajectory seemed destined to lead to disaster. Instead, he became Germany's foreign minister, shaping the country to a marked degree in his own image.

Paul Hockenos has had the good idea of fitting Fischer's mind-boggling career into the wider story of how Germany has dealt with its Hitler legacy and acquired its present character. An American commentator based in Berlin and specializing in German politics, he wrote a previous book on the neo-Nazi far Right, which was the opposing wing of the extra-parliamentary protest movement. His admiration of things German, and Fischer in particular, sometimes runs away with him, and loosens his prose and his judgment.

Fischer's parents were Hungarian Germans, modest people with a butcher shop in a village near Budapest. They seem not to have been Nazis, but after the war they were expelled from the country along with the other ethnic Germans. Born in Germany but an émigré, the young Fischer grew up rootless and restless, in a sort of social and spiritual vacuum into which trouble was likely to rush. Sure enough, he flunked out of school, ran away to marry the first of a series of five wives, and supported her and himself by shoplifting. In Frankfurt, he sat in on Marxist classes at the university, an autodidact with no formal education. Growing his hair and his beard, living in a "co-op" with squatters, he was the perfect stereotype of a rebel without a cause.

Violence and crime came naturally. He and his friends practiced street-fighting and throwing Molotov cocktails. When a woman in the squat was raped, they agreed that calling in the police wasn't the thing to do, but instead gave the rapist a beating he wouldn't forget. Photographs show that Fischer was present at a demonstration when a policeman was badly burned by a Molotov cocktail that exploded in his patrol car. The evidence was not enough for a conviction. Many years later, the daughter of Ulrike Meinhof created a scandal by providing a magazine with photographs of Fischer gratuitously beating up a policeman at another demonstration in 1973. He attended a PLO conference in Algiers to promote the usual anti-Israeli line, and can be seen in other photographs applauding Arafat's speech promising the "ultimate victory of the Palestinian people."

Quite why Fischer did not develop into a full-blown terrorist is unclear. With an edge of romancing or apology, Hockenos speculates that his "tryst with violence had gone way too far" and a voice within shrieked, "Stop!" Periods of living by stealing books and driving a taxi were dead ends. The discovery that he could be a persuasive orator fired ambition, allowing Hockenos to make the judgment that Fischer was really "a politics junkie second to none," and always "raring to climb back into the ring."

The United States alone guaranteed German freedom, but Fischer's big idea was that this had to stop. President Reagan's proposal in the early 1980s to station cruise missiles in West Germany gave Fischer his opening; he would advocate the scrapping of Adenauer's central policy of alliance with the United States at all costs, and replace it with pacifism. The Green party already had such a program, but it was a mere embryo, appealing only to the protest generation. With determination and skill, Fischer worked his way in a matter of years to the top of it.

Probably he could bring himself sincerely to support the issues that had brought the Greens to form a party—the abolition of nuclear energy, feminism, gay rights, multiculturalism, opposition to ecological abuse, and the whole kitbag of left-wing gripes and nostrums—but anti-American pacifism was the issue that made Fischer the leader of the Greens and a personality to be reckoned with. In the climate of public opinion compounded from guilt for the past and fear of the future, he acquired what Hockenos calls "pop-star status."

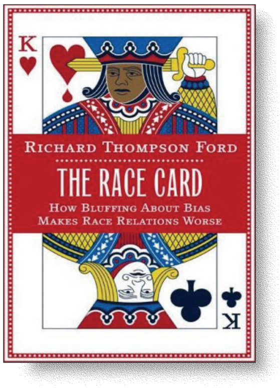
Implementation of Fischer's pacifism would have been as dangerous to the state as RAF and Baader-Meinhof terrorism. If Fischer had had his way, Germany would have opted out of the Cold War, and in due course the Soviet Union would have won at least Europe. Adenauer's idea was proved right when the United States brought the Cold War to a successful conclusion, supervising the peaceful reunification of the two Germanys.

Gerhard Schröder and the Social Democrats won the 1998 election but, in order to form a government, they were obliged to take the Greens into a coalition. So the unattractive, hirsute, and semicriminal Sixties brawler and beater of policemen smoothly evolved into a member of the establishment—foreign minister for seven years, an ornament on national and international platforms, his hair cut short, well dressed in three-piece suits, and still able to extend his series of wives. The change in status, Hockenos observes, was visible in Fischer's narcissism and abusive behavior.

As minister, he was often contradictory to the point of incoherence. He got parliament to authorize the sending of troops on missions abroad, especially in the Balkans, where Hitler's armies had once been especially brutal. This unexpected rupture with pacifism almost destroyed the Green party, on which Fischer depended for office. But when the United States called a conference in Munich to put the case for overthrowing Saddam Hussein, Fischer jabbed a finger in the direction of Donald Rumsfeld and said, in English, "Sorry, you haven't convinced me!" Germany then joined France and Russia in opposing the Iraq campaign of 2003, and the alliance on which Adenauer had once staked Germany's future was effectively buried.

Meanwhile Fischer was carrying to an extreme Kohl's idea that Germany's future lay in a federal Europe. In a different manner than the overt terror of the RAF and the Baader-Meinhof gang, this too is a threat to the state. Hockenos gives the astonishing figure that, in the 1990s, for the $29 that every French taxpayer contributed to the European Union budget, his German counterpart paid in $264. At what point will German national interest assert itself, and how will it do so? This book aspires to be a cautionary tale about the way that Germany has been able to tame its monsters, even one with claws and teeth like Fischer, and so turn out as praiseworthy and provincial as everyone else in Europe. Fischer's career is over, but the tale may still have quite another ending. **NR**

Race Games, Old and New



The Race Card:
How Bluffing About Bias
Makes Race Relations Worse,
by Richard Thompson Ford
(Farrar, Straus, 400 pp., $26)

ROBERT VERBRUGGEN

It's hard to imagine a more red-meat-conservative title. At last, someone—a black law professor from Stanford, no less—is calling attention to the vast injustice of misplaced accusations of bigotry. The book itself turns out to be a bit of a bait-and-switch—it's a wide-ranging collection of essays, with few strong attacks on bias hustlers—but it contains much of value.

Richard Thompson Ford does cover the race card, broadly defined (he includes both the Tawana Brawley hoax and the fat-acceptance movement's claim that anti-overweight discrimination is "just like racism"). His analysis is clear-headed, for the most part, though the few policy proposals he espouses are seriously flawed.

Regarding the race card as it's typically understood—an accusation that's untrue, or at least far from clearly true—Ford provides a number of anecdotes and analyzes them in detail. There's the ritzy boutique that turned Oprah away after its closing time, and Clarence Thomas's "high-tech lynching." Ford almost always concludes that racism could have played a role—because, after all, any negative interaction involving a black person *might* not have happened were the person white.

And that's the rub. Ford describes our current era as "post-racist," meaning not that racism is over but that it's been completely transformed, and for the better. Outright bigotry is completely socially unacceptable, leaving parody (e.g., the comedy of Sarah Silverman) as its sole expression. Still, blacks' history places them, disproportionately, at the bottom of the economic and educational ladders ("racism without racists"), and whites who notice the effects of this can develop negative stereotypes. They're not illogical, as race is "an accurate, if crude, proxy for some types of antisocial behavior."

Ford argues not that blacks should refrain from "bluffing about bias"—that is, playing the race card when they're not certain that racism is in play—but that they should use gentle language, and that both accuser and accused should step back and analyze carefully, as Ford himself does. Take, for example, blacks' having a harder time getting cabs; this might be because blacks tend to live in high-crime areas. Forcing cabbies to take all fares without hesitation, though it makes the world fairer for blacks, shifts the burden of crime onto working-class drivers. Public policy should reflect this.

That's all well and good, and among pundits who address race, Ford has a far-above-average grasp of economic concepts (slight praise, unfortunately). But it's disappointing that let's-have-a-better-discussion is the best he can do in terms of solutions. Speaking of economic concepts, there's really no incentive for it, as harsher accusations attract more attention.

Ford's writing on "racism by analogy" provokes important questions as well. The black civil-rights struggle was immensely successful: It didn't just eliminate government mandates for segregation and white supremacy, it prompted America to carve out exceptions to its traditions of property rights and freedom of association. Others who face discrimination have, not surprisingly, rushed to copy the model.

The big question here is: What was it about black rights that justified those exceptions? If the only problem was that people used factors other than "merit" (as defined by lawmakers) when making decisions, virtually every group deserves government protection, from the overweight to smokers to the poorly groomed. Ford, however, argues that it's not discrimination, or even unfair discrimination, that makes black rights worthy of government intervention. Rather, it's the extent and severity of the discrimination. When racism pervades society, blacks face it at every turn, and while skin color is sometimes a useful proxy (think cab drivers), American history makes it worth forcing whites not to use it even today. The same cannot be said of other demographic groups, especially those in which personal choices play large roles. What's more, overuse of the racism analogy saps the potency of genuine claims of unfairness.

This is a reasonable analysis, with the flaw that it employs a sliding scale. In each case, Ford can only weigh the similarities against the differences, always conceding somewhere that this is indeed a little like racism. Most of the judgments could have been made, just as carefully, in the opposite direction: People openly ostracize the overweight and ugly. If we still need government activism for black rights, why not cut these folks in on the deal?

And Ford does like government activism. The problem here is not so much that he takes the liberal position, but that he seems utterly unfamiliar with the conservative point of view and its supporting data. A little Thomas Sowell could do Ford a lot of good.

Ford addresses affirmative action, without mentioning that it can actually hurt blacks by placing them in positions beyond their skills. He says it "makes sense" to use proportional representation as a baseline in discrimination law (if your community is 20 percent black and your employee roster isn't, you should have to "meet integration benchmarks" or pay a fine), but he admits elsewhere that the legacy of slavery means blacks, by and large, are less qualified for many jobs. He never draws the obvious inference, that even a perfectly impartial selection process will typically skew white—and when locating near blacks means hiring people who are less qualified, businesses have a reason to head to white areas.

Ford does like government activism. The problem here is not so much that he takes the liberal position, but that he seems utterly unfamiliar with the conservative point of view and its supporting data.

The author proposes, as an overarching goal for public policy, black assimilation into mainstream American culture. Terrific ends, questionable means: Not only should we forcibly integrate schools, he says, but sometimes we should "abandon academic tracking and accept busing" to ensure the diversity of individual classrooms. When it comes to neighborhoods, we should "end or relax exclusionary local zoning policies [which mandate that homes and lots be large, and thus expensive] and invest in job creation, training, and counseling."

Ford isn't naïve enough to claim this is politically likely—even within the Left, he admits, multiculturalism has supplanted the melting pot. But one important problem Ford doesn't mention is that these solutions pit white interests against black ones: To help blacks, whites have to put their kids in less-challenging classes and open their fancy communities to the poor of all races. Unfortunately for Ford's proposals, this is a democracy where whites outnumber blacks several times over.

But the deeper issue is that Ford simply assumes forced integration would improve racial harmony and encourage assimilation; this is the foundation on which he asserts that the benefits outweigh the costs in freedom. In some cases, integration can certainly create interracial friendships, but plenty of tensions come too. Black and white parents alike have complained about busing children across town when there are schools nearby.

There's a microcosm of this in Evanston/Skokie School District 65 in Illinois, one of the first in the country to integrate in the 1960s, which since 1985 has operated under a guideline that no racial group should account for more than 60 percent of a school's student body. The racial test-score gap remains severe and plainly noticeable. I attended a meeting there a few years back where a nice, liberal white lady complained that her child had come home one day and asked why the black students couldn't read as well as the white ones. Integration definitely draws attention to racial differences, and it's questionable how much it ameliorates them.

The Race Card is a thoughtful book, and wonderfully written; Ford doles out some laugh-out-loud irreverence with his incisive commentary. Readers should bear his lapses in mind, but pay attention to some of the lessons he provides. **NR**

YOU ARE NOT OTHER MEN

They will not save you, those from whom you sought
some help, no, nor the writings they left behind;
you are not other men, and now you find
you are the center of the labyrinth wrought
by your own footsteps. Neither the last breath
of Christ or Socrates nor the deified
golden Siddhartha, who unresisting died
at day's end in a garden, saves you from death.
Dust, like all that, whatever words you write
and dust as well the pitiful words you say.
Fate will have no pity anyway
and God's night is an everlasting night.
You are made up of time, and you are in it.
You are each single, solitary minute.

—ROBERT MEZEY

■ FILM ■

Thank the Academy?

ROSS DOUTHAT

THE writers' strike is settled, the picketing scribes have dispersed to their keyboards, and if the stars feel any pangs of social conscience while strolling the red carpet they'll have only their fuel-guzzling, globe-warming private jets to blame. The Oscars, in other words, will go on as usual—and for the second year in a row, your faithful critic is playing catch-up, having failed to review three of the Best Picture nominees until now.

Inevitably, the Academy and I don't quite see eye to eye. If I were picking a suspense film for the final five, for instance, I would take *Eastern Promises* or *Zodiac* over *Michael Clayton*, a George Clooney vehicle that's torn between two genres—the lawsuit drama and the paranoid thriller—that are ultimately mutually exclusive. In the lawsuit movie, some noble soul—a crusading lawyer, a conscience-stricken corporate drone—leads the charge for justice against a wicked corporation, with briefs and motions flying. (Think *The Insider*, or *Erin Brockovich*.) In a paranoid thriller, the justice system offers no relief, because whatever evil there is goes all the way to the top. (Think *The Parallax View*, or the recent *Bourne* trilogy.) The lawsuit movie is realistic, if tendentious; the paranoid thriller is fantastic. The lawsuit movie is liberal; the paranoid thriller is radical.

Michael Clayton's plot starts out as straightforward lawsuit-movie fare. Our hero, Clooney's Clayton, is a fixer at a high-priced New York law firm, deep in debt and up to his eyes in cynicism. He's called in to deal with one of his colleagues—Tom Wilkinson, gobbling the scenery and demanding seconds—who's gone off his medication and around the bend. Except that Wilkinson's character claims to be enjoying a rare moment of clarity, in which the true horror of their line of work has been revealed to him—and in particular, the wickedness of defending a chemical conglomerate named U/North, which has sowed the soil around a farming community with poisoned fertilizer.

No doubt you can see where this is going: The fixer, Clayton, will gradually rediscover his conscience and take the plaintiffs' side against his own employers, setting aside financial and professional temptations in order to Do the Right Thing. It's a predictable story, but the movie tells it well enough: The dialogue is terse, coarse, and bitten-off; Clooney is as magnetic as ever; and there's fine supporting work from Tilda Swinton, as the high-strung U/North legal counsel, and Sydney Pollack, as Clayton's shark of a boss. The visual mood is just right, juxtaposing the depressing, fluorescent sheen of its corporate interiors with wintry, burnt-out cityscapes and countrysides, as though U/North's toxins had drained all the color from the world.

But *Michael Clayton* can't leave well enough alone. It wants to generate more suspense than a legal drama can, and the means it uses—a hard-to-swallow second-act murder, a risible third-act car bombing—belong to a different kind of story entirely, one that asks us to suspend our disbelief from the beginning instead of springing wild implausibilities on us midway through.

If *Clayton* goes wrong because it doesn't know what sort of movie it's supposed to be, then Joe Wright's *Atonement* has the opposite problem. It knows exactly what it wants to do—adapt prestigious novel set in 1930s Europe, add water, and win Oscar—and never manages to become anything more than that. *Atonement* has everything an Anglophile could want: romance and intrigue in an English country house, courage under fire in a Blitz-blasted London, fabulous costumes, passionate encounters, shocking betrayals, a sweeping score. Moment to moment, the film can be quite wonderful, particularly in the scenes that don't require much from Keira Knightley, stick-thin and typically underwhelming as one of the story's star-crossed lovers. But all the great moments don't add up to a great film: It's telling that the movie's finest *cinematic* achievement, a stunning five-minute tracking shot across the chaos of Dunkirk, could have been stripped out of the movie without altering the story a whit.

Part of the problem is the source material. Ian McEwan's novel is brilliant but overly self-conscious, so aware of itself as a fiction that it never swallows the reader whole. Wright's too-faithful adaptation throws the story's weaknesses into sharp relief. It's a series of free-floating World War II–era set pieces rather than a gripping and coherent yarn.

Despite their faults, though, both *Atonement* and *Michael Clayton* aren't grit-your-teeth disasters of the sort that the Academy occasionally sees fit to honor. Twenty minutes in, I feared that *Juno*, a sleeper hit in which a dry-witted Minnesota teen named Juno MacGuff (Ellen Page) finds herself unexpectedly pregnant, might be such a debacle. It was written by one Diablo Cody, a former stripper, and the movie's opening act lives up to its hyper-ironic pedigree, with a flurry of sight gags—a Sunny-D-chugging march to the convenience store to buy a pregnancy test, a phone call to an abortion clinic from a hamburger phone—and dreadfully knowing dialogue, from the convenience-store clerk who remarks, "This is one doodle that can't be undid, home-skillet" to Juno's best friend Leah, whose response to the big news starts with "honest-to-blog?" and ends with "Phuket, Thailand!"

But it turns out that *Juno* crams 90 percent of its false notes into those first 20 minutes, as though Cody and the director, Jason Reitman, just needed to get the bad one-liners out of their system so that they could settle in to the business of making a funny, perceptive, and genuinely affecting film. As Juno herself, Page is pitch-perfect, striking just the right balance between precociousness and immaturity, superficial cynicism and easily wounded idealism. Her supporting cast is likewise phenomenal, from Michael Cera as the sweet dork who knocked her up to Jennifer Garner and Jason Bateman as the would-be adoptive parents who aren't as perfect as they seem. And the film as a whole manages to be at once ambitious and restrained: There are no car bombs here, no country-house melodramas; there's only the tragicomedy of ordinary life. Which is enough. Along with *No Country for Old Men* and *There Will Be Blood*, *Juno* is a Best Picture nominee that actually deserved to be nominated. So kudos to the Academy: Three out of five ain't bad. **NR**

■ TRAVEL ■

Brushes Through India

JAY NORDLINGER

‘WHAT’S playing in India?” asked a friend of mine, before I took off. Oh, nothing in particular: just India itself, for two weeks of exploration. My friends and I begin in Bombay, or, as we’re all supposed to say now, “Mumbai.” I ask a local lady about this; she is a sharp and savvy schoolteacher. She says that “Mumbai” has been forced on everyone by a certain political crowd; she prefers, when speaking English, to say “Bombay”—and why not?

Bombay is a very, very populous city in this very, very populous country. People are everywhere, tucked into every nook and cranny. If traffic is moving—which is a very big if—they fly about on motorcycles, without helmets. There are children on those bikes, too, carefree, as well as helmet-free. You hear that India is a heavily regulated country. Yes, but it’s interesting what they choose to regulate, and what not.

Here’s a little political-economic note: I buy a packet of cracker-like things, and it says, “Less taxes = more biscuits.” Oh, lower taxes mean a lot of good things, my friends.

Before I came here, several people who know the country told me one thing, independently. They said, “You’ve heard about the burgeoning middle class, and it is true. But bear in mind that India is still a very poor country—it may shock you.” Poverty is a given, yes. The place is not all tech companies and call centers, to put it mildly. And animal transportation—camel-drawn carts, etc.—is utterly routine.

Children beg, saying “Hello, hello,” while making eating gestures with their fingers. The adult beggars I see are very few: young mothers with infants; and old, wretched men. I see no able-bodied men beg—as I do where I live, in Manhattan, every day.

A morning walk in Bharuch—state of Gujarat—is enjoyable and instructive. Through the neighborhoods come vendors with handcarts. They sell fruit, or vegetables, or milk. They call out the names of their products as they go, leather-lunged. It occurs to me that this is an anti-Wal-Marter’s dream. There is no one-stop shopping. Everyone pushes his own tiny line, earning pennies.

Girls are lovely in their saris. This is true of richer ones and poorer ones, spiffier ones and scruffier. Are girls here more attractive than elsewhere? You may think so; it’s more likely that they’re attractive because they’re so feminine. They seem to enjoy being female, and carry themselves that way. They sort of sashay along. I doubt softball here is much good.

Generally speaking, men are almost as style-conscious as women. You might even say they are vain, matching their clothes, frequently combing their hair, Fonzie-style. Whether they have money or not, they want to cut a figure.

Down by the river in Bharuch, I see women washing clothes in mud pools, beating them with a paddle. I’m surprised that this is still going on. And I think of my Indian-American friends back home: super-educated, super-affluent, many of them. How many generations removed are they from this clothes-paddling? Not many. Human life can move fast. (In both directions?)

This country is famous for smells—good and bad—and I get plenty of whiffs on my walk. One whiff I get is of incense: and it flashes me back to boarding school. The kids used to burn incense, for two reasons: It was cool, because New Age; and they wanted to cover up the smell of their pot.

You hear that India is a polluted country, and I’m afraid it’s so. You perhaps don’t know pollution until you know Indian pollution, or Third World pollution in general. And once you experience it, you don’t want to hear a word from an American environmentalist, about the American environment, again. Kyoto my . . .

As I walk about Bharuch, my mind is a jumble of clichés. “Life and death are particularly stark in India. Everything is in bold relief.” True. There is tremendous vibrancy, but also the odd dog carcass, just off the street. Life and death fill eyes, ears, and nostrils. “In India, the rich and poor live in very close proximity.” True, so true. And then there are the famous contradictions: “India is alluring and repugnant, irresistible and abominable.” True, true.

Everywhere, in villages, towns, and cities, you share the streets with animals. There are both Democrats and Republicans, both donkeys and elephants (although the former greatly outnumber the latter—just as at American universities). There are goats, monkeys, camels, boars, buffalo. In Bharuch, my hosts’ garden is stuffed with peacocks. And, throughout India, it’s a joy to see parrots: which are not meant only for the cages of little old ladies.

Cows, of course, are ubiquitous. Here, they all die of old age. An Indian-American friend tells me a funny story: Years ago, an Indian of her acquaintance came to America. He started eating hamburgers and steaks with abandon. Asked to explain himself, he said, “I figure only Indian cows are sacred.” One of the most charming rationalizations I have ever heard.

It’s a pleasure to hear Indian English, which is often musical. And it can be quite old-fashioned, even King Jamesian: Our guide in Jodhpur (home of the pants) says, “This maharajah had no male issue.” I also like a sign, at the approach of a toll booth: “Dead Slow.”

Even if you know the language, you may not. Return to Bombay with me, for a moment: I’m sitting in a restaurant with some old friends and new acquaintances—locals. In the course of the meal, I ask, “Does this restaurant seek out tourists, or does it exist mainly for natives?” Silence—unusual, for our talky group. Finally, a lady says, “What do you mean by ‘natives’?” Uh-oh. I say, “Well, you know—‘natives.’ People born here, from here.” More silence. I then say, “Is the word pejorative here?” Not in standard English, but here, yes: It was so under the British.

A foreign culture, even an accessible one, can be a minefield.

Here’s something that takes some getting used to: the presence of the swastika, everywhere. It is a venerable Hindu symbol, twisted by the Nazis. You see it on the

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Mr. Nordlinger is an NR senior editor. Pieces like this can be found in *Here, There & Everywhere: Collected Writings of Jay Nordlinger*. It is available at Store.NationalReview.com.

thresholds of homes. And, in Jaisalmer, I see the Hotel Swastika. I think, "Surely this must repel European tourists." I then have a darker thought: "Maybe it attracts some?"

You'll want a word on Indian toilets (won't you?). Some of them are terrifying—you'll hold it till kingdom come. Others of them are benign, even inviting. There is a great variety. An Udaipur restaurant presents two doors: One says "Indian Toilet," the other says "Western Toilet." You know the expression "When in Rome . . ."? I'm afraid I do not—do as the Romans.

This is a musical country, as you know, and you hear music everywhere: from TVs and radios, sure, but also from loudspeakers on trucks. And at marriage celebrations, which go on constantly, in this marriage-loving country. Oddly, I hear "Frère Jacques"—three times, in three separate Indian cities. Both played and sung. The singers need a little help with pronunciation.

And the variety of cellphone rings is dizzying, as it is the world over. Our guide in Udaipur has a phone that plays "Jingle Bells." Does he know it's a Christmas carol? He does now. And, in the little Gujarati village of Dantali, a cellphone breaks the still of the evening. What is it playing? I'll tell you, but first, a story.

Some months back, Paul Johnson, the British writer, wrote about Arthur Hugh Clough, the British poet who lived from 1819 to 1861. He wrote one poem that stuck: "Say not the struggle naught availeth." Johnson remembered hearing a car salesman in Perth recite this poem. And he, Johnson, thought, "That's fame."

Well, on this quiet Dantali evening, the cellphone plays the theme to *Love Story*, by Francis Lai (taken to great popular heights by Henry Mancini). And the thought immediately comes to me: "That's fame."

We have talked of variety, and what there's really a variety of is people. A *tremendous* variety of them. Seldom will you see a collection of people so diverse. You see men who look like they stepped out of antiquity: simple wrap, walking staff, painted face, wizened. And they're waiting for the same bus as people who look like Wall Streeters. Somewhere in Rajasthan, I see women with hoops through their noses carrying huge bundles of sticks on their heads. I think: "This is foreign travel—you ain't looking at Big Ben."

Race is a touchy subject here, maybe touchier than in most other places. In the *Hindustan Times*, I see brides advertised. Most of the ads say "fair and slim." I don't see any women advertised as dark and chunky. And the ads go on to give height and weight, as well as academic credentials ("MBA!") and other data. Talk about a meat market—although most of these ladies are advertised as vegetarian.

Great as the temples, palaces, forts, and other sites in India may be, most valuable are encounters with people. I could tell a hundred stories. Here's one:

One of my hosts in Bharuch is a distinguished intellectual—an educator and a novelist. He studied at Washington University (St. Louis) in the late 1950s and early 1960s. He ran out of money, and was on the point of leaving. But an American family—just middle-class, in his description—took him in. They expected nothing in return. The man marvels at their generosity, and at their egalitarian spirit: "Here they were, sharing a bathroom and a kitchen and everything with an Indian boy—just as though it was nothing."

Encounters with children are particularly delightful. There are masses and masses of them, everywhere. Front and center. Often they are in school uniforms, and shiny as pennies. No matter how filthy their surroundings—and they can be vile—these children are immaculate. And, as a rule, open, curious, fun-loving, and just plain loving. These kids have nothing, many of them. And yet they seem happier and better adjusted than our kids—in America.

I'll give you just one favorite kid story: We're in Gundi, another Gujarati village, like Dantali. Children are massed in a square. Seeing me, they see an opportunity to try out their English. They want to count to ten, and I test them. They know the numbers, well enough; but they're a little shaky on the order.

One boy specializes in the number seven. He likes to call out "Seven!" doggedly. I hold up six fingers: "Seven!" he exclaims. I have to shake my head. But then I hold up another finger, and it's his moment in the sun.

Not every child is in school, of course. The beggars aside, many kids work: Child labor is unshocking here, part of the furniture. Near the city of Bikaner, a boy checks the air in our tires. I think he's about ten—hard to tell, for in this country the kids, slight, look younger than they are.

And the adults? Like the children, they seem happy, content—amazingly so. A companion of mine comments, "There is no tension on faces." People smile, even beam. And, from a material point of view, they have nothing to beam about. Every day, I walk by people in New York who scowl, frown, sneer. And they have everything, by comparison. You hear that happiness is a state of mind. That may be a Hallmark sentiment—but not less true for that.

It goes without saying that Indians, being people, have their complaints. In Jaisalmer, I meet a group of young men who hawk products and services to tourists. They speak decent English, and have a tremendous curiosity about the world. Their faces shine, alive. One young man asks me about Area 51: What do I know about it? Not much, I have to tell him. I'm not sure he believes me—probably thinks I'm in on some conspiracy.

Another man in the group tells me about the obstacles they all face. If these obstacles had a name, it would be corruption. India is getting better, the man says—liberalizing. But fast enough and broadly enough? He and his friends do everything right, the man says: take the right classes, pass the right exams. But there comes a time to grease palms—and, being poor, they have no grease. So they feel stuck, stifled—denied the right to pursue their dreams and destinies.

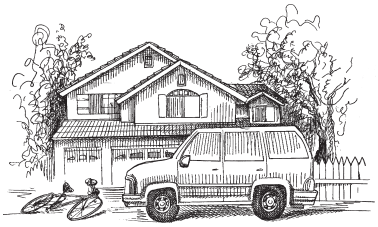
What a waste.

Anyway, when they finish, I say, "Thank you. You have given me quite an education." They protest, "You're a lot more educated than we are." I say I'm not so sure. Then one young man—the Area 51 fellow—says, "You're more *experienced*." "That's right," I say. "I've had more experience, more opportunities. I was lucky to be born where I was." They agree enthusiastically.

But I am also lucky to have come here, and met them, and India. **NR**

■ **THE STRAGGLER** ■

White Lightning



JOHN DERBYSHIRE

I SEE that the highest grades of Chinese *baijiu* ("white liquor"—it's pronounced *bye-jee-oh*) were retailing at over $3,000 a bottle this Lunar New Year. It is good to know that all the T-bonds we have been shipping over there are having their coupons put to use.

This particular extravagance probably seems baffling to non-Chinese who have had some slight acquaintance with *baijiu*. General opinion among round-eyes is that while the stuff is probably very efficacious at stripping the rust off bolts, it is not fit for human consumption.

What do they know, these barbarous dilettantes? I have been drinking *baijiu* for 30 years, and have got a taste for it. We have a good selection in the cocktail cabinet here, replenished at intervals from a shop in Manhattan's Chinatown. I'll allow that it took me a while to see the virtues of *baijiu*. I'll even allow, if pressed, that the principal one of those virtues is a very quick buzz. Mrs. Straggler drinks the stuff, though, and our Chinese friends drink it, so I have gotten used to it by way of social obligation.

To be perfectly honest about it, I am not sure I can distinguish one type of *baijiu* from another. The invaluable Wikipedia lists 20 varieties, most of whose names I recognize, but I should fail dismally on a blind tasting test. I think I might be able to pick out Yuk Bing Siu, which I used to drink by the tumbler in my reckless Hong Kong days, and which has a peculiar texture. As well it might if Wikipedia is to be believed: "After distillation, pork fat is stored with the liquor but removed before bottling. Its name probably derives from the brewing process: In Cantonese, *yuk* ('jade') is a homophone of 'meat,' and *bing* means 'ice,' which describes the appearance of the pork fat floating in the liquor."

Like everything that Chinese people ingest, *baijiu* comes with a catalog of instructions from whoever introduces you to it—promised health benefits, proper times and seasons for use, correct accompanying items and events, history, geography, and so on. No wonder Asian kids ace the SAT. I can never hold much of the data in my mind for long, but I do like the buzz.

There is a widespread impression in lands beyond the Wall that the Chinese are not great drinkers. This is quite wrong, though as always in that "world within the world" there are regional variations. Mrs. Straggler's home district in the northeast (a Chinese person *never* says "Manchuria") was opened up to regular Chinese settlement only late in the last dynasty. The soil is very fertile, but there was no transport infrastructure. Nineteenth-century travelers saw stills everywhere. H. E. M. James, passing through in the 1880s, explains the logic:

> The distilleries were really formidable places, with strong brick walls, 18 feet high, surmounted by *terre-plein* and parapet all complete, the gate fortified, and at each angle flanking towers armed with small carronades. . . . The doors and doorframes are of sheet iron, ornamented with massive studs. . . . These distilleries represent the capital and wealth of the district, which can only export its surplus grain in the form of liquor, owing to its distance from the sea and the badness of the roads.

I have seen men lying dead drunk in the street in Manchuria, and in winter months, too. The strong Russian influence in the region probably has not helped matters.

Chinese dipsomania goes far back, though. Li Po, the most imaginative of the great tranche of 8th-century poets, was a notorious lush, and wrote some fine poems about drinking. He was once summoned to the emperor's presence when too drunk to walk—he was carried in on a chair—and ordered to compose a poem for the emperor's favorite concubine, plump and devious Lady Yang. Li dashed off three quatrains on the spot. They were at once set to music and sung, the emperor himself playing the melody on a jade lute, and now they are in all the anthologies:

> Lovely now together, his lady and his
> flowers
> Lighten for ever the Emperor's eye . . .

It's a good story, though a dubious one: Li left the capital for good late in 744, while Lady Yang did not show herself openly at court until the fall of 745.

A century and a half previously, the philosopher Wang Ji wrote about a journey he claimed to have made to the Land of the Drunk, one of those fantasy places the medieval Chinese loved to invent and ended up half-believing in. There, he said, citizens "sip the wind and drink the dew, and abstain from the five cereals."

Wang was inspired by a 3rd-century clique of Taoist nonconformists called the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, who engaged in drinking parties and homosexual romps while philosophizing about—what else?—ideal forms of government. They actually came up with a political philosophy of inebriation. Says Wolfgang Bauer in *China and the Search for Happiness*: "The official collapsing with glazed eyes behind his desk, who uses his offices primarily for drinking bouts, and makes his acceptance of a position in the provinces depend upon the quality of the wine cellar, became a kind of ideal figure to be applauded and admired." (It helps here to understand that the Taoist-Legalist ideal of statecraft was a system of such all-encompassing and inflexibly applied laws and punishments that the ruler had nothing to do—nothing but, as a very old cliché prescribed, "sit on his throne as though drunk.")

There is even a style of martial arts called "Drunk Man," in which participants stagger and weave to evade each other's blows. I have seen it done; it looks just as silly as it sounds. I understand the escapist appeal, though, to the inmates of a civilization obsessed with enumeration and order.

And so we finish up our New Year's meal in a quiet suburb far from China, and as far in time from emperors and philosophers. Husband and wife toast each other with Fen Jiu, one of the oldest types of liquor (6th century), fancying all the drunks of the ages looking down at us from above the February mists. The kids have already started on the sticky-cake dessert—essential to the meal because its name is a homophone for "top of the year." In China, time flows downwards. Happy New Year! **NR**

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happy warrior

MARK STEYN

Hypocrite Sister

FOR reasons best known to its editors, the *Guardian* in Britain has been publishing extensive excerpts from *The Terror Dream: Fear and Fantasy in Post-9/11 America*, by Susan Faludi. The other morning, halfway through one of no fewer than three excerpts (plus an interview with the author) in that day's edition, I came across this, harking back to the fall of 2001:

> Fighting the gender war seemed to be a preoccupying concern, too, of Mark Steyn's November 19 article in the National Review, in which he denounced the proponents of nanny-state big government—'Hillary & Co' prominent among them—for having de-balled American men in the air just as they had on the ground. The airline cabin was 'the perfect symbol' of 'the modern social-democratic state', he wrote, with a female FAA director who stripped pilots of their handguns and an oligarchy of flight attendants on every plane whose dictates had to be obeyed.

You know, Susan, sometimes it's not about you. I wasn't writing about "the gender war," but about, you know, the *war*—the one involving thousands of dead bodies in New York and bombers setting off for Kabul and Kandahar. But if you've been peddling "war" as a lame-o leftie metaphor your whole life, I guess it's hard to remember there was ever another kind. I didn't recall that ancient NR column's being about "fighting the gender war," and, indeed, on sending my mail-order bride to retrieve it from the vault, I could discern no "gender war" component to it whatsoever. There is no animus directed toward the "female FAA director" on account of her femaleness, which can be deduced only from the fact that I mention her name. The piece is about big government, and, insofar as it targets any serving politician, it's far more critical of a non-female, Dick Cheney, and his post-9/11 swoon to the virtues of the overbearing state, than of Hillary or the FAA director or anyone else.

The Western, feminist Left is like those Japanese guys in the jungle who don't know the war is over. Faludi doesn't know the war is over and she won. Which is why, as Kate O'Beirne pointed out in her book, American feminists are reduced to complaining that "women make up only 1.3 percent of plumbers, pipe fitters and steamfitters." Jiminy. Maybe laying pipe is something that appeals particularly to boys, and maybe girls would rather be the hotshot lawyers who sue the contractor for not hiring enough female plumbers: After all, close to 60 percent of U.S. college graduates are now women. If it's hard to get a female pipe-fitter, maybe it's because they're all at law school.

Courtesy of the patriarchs

PARS/ABACA

At the time Faludi was detecting patriarchal oppression in my NR prose, the Bush/Blair patriarchal phallocracy was busy liberating Afghanistan, a country where women were forbidden by law to feel sunlight on their faces. When I used to point that out in speeches, huffy Western feminists would admit that the Taliban was a particularly vile regime but insist that it was a long way away and not especially relevant. Okay. But all that's happened in the last six years is that we now know that that distant evil on the fringes of the map has embedded itself in the heart of every Western city. There are forced cousin marriages in Muslim communities throughout the developed world: In 80 percent of Pakistani families in New York, the parents determine whom and when you marry; 57 percent of British Pakistanis are wed to a first cousin, with daughters as young as eleven being sent abroad to marry. Ontario gives polygamous men welfare checks for each of their wives, and Canadian immigration recognizes arranged marriages performed over the telephone. In Australian hospitals, there are "resource coordinators" for female genital mutilation. In the Netherlands, Muslims account for the vast majority of those taken into battered women's shelters. There are "honor killings" in Germany and Scandinavia, Toronto and Dallas.

When they're sufficiently hectored by the likes of David Horowitz, Faludi and her sisters can be temporarily roused to express some pro forma objection to "honor killings" and the like. But only for a moment, and then it's back to the usual dreary myopic parochial preoccupations. I appreciate that to Ms. Faludi I will always be as revoltingly patriarchal as a 1950s sitcom dad. Yet there is something not just boring but grotesque in Western feminists' inability to prioritize. They seem implicitly to have accepted a two-tier sisterhood, in which white, upscale, liberal women twitter about NR columnists' appalling misogyny in criticizing a female Bush-administration official, while simultaneously the women of the fastest-growing population group in the Western world are forced into clitoridectomies, forced into burqas, forced into marriage, forced into psychiatric wards, forced into hiding—and, if all else fails, forced off the apartment balcony by their brothers and fathers to fall to their deaths, as has happened to at least seven Muslim girls in Sweden recently. This is the real "war against women" being waged across the Western world, but, like so much of the Left, a pampered and privileged sisterhood would rather fight pseudo-battles over long-vanquished enemies. **NR**

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